A shelf of old books

Annie Fields

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A SHELF OF OLD BOOKS

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"MY FRIEND'S LIBRARY."

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK, MDCCCXCV

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A SHELF OF OLD BOOKS

BY MRS. JAMES T. FIELDS

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK. MDCCCXCV

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LEIGH HUNT

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Portrait of Leigh Hunt, by Samuel Laurence.

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LEIGH HUNT

THERE is a sacredness about the belongings of good and great men which is quite apart from the value and significance of the things themselves. Their books become especially endeared to us; as we turn the pages they have loved, we can see another hand pointing along the lines, another head bending over the open volume. A writer's books make his workshop and his pleasure-house in one, and in turning over his possessions we discover the field in which he worked and the key to his garden of the Hesperides.

The influence of Leigh Hunt's surroundings upon John Keats illustrates this idea perfectly. Keats was hardly known, even to himself, when Leigh Hunt, with his infallible touchstone for discerning literary excellence in others, recognized his sensitive nature and drew him into

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friendly relations. Charles Cowden Clarke tells us that he went to call on Leigh Hunt one day, at a pretty cottage in the Vale of Health, on Hampstead Heath, soon after he and Keats had left school and gone to London. He carried in his pocket two or three of Keats's sonnets, which he thought were so good for a youth under age that he would venture to show them to Leigh Hunt, but he was not prepared for the prompt admiration with which they were received. The visit ended in a promise that he would soon bring Keats to Hampstead. It was in the library of this cottage, where one night a temporary bed had been made up for him on the sofa, that Keats composed the poem on "Sleep and Poetry," inspired by his surroundings. It was a modest room, clothed with such treasures as even a poor man may possess, but none the less there was inspiration in them for a poet's brain.

"It was a poet's home who keeps the keys
Of pleasure's temple—round about were hung
The glorious features of the bards who sung
In other ages—cold and sacred busts
Smiled at each other."

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Portrait of Leigh Hunt. (From a drawing made in 1815.)

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Keats's poem is indeed an exquisite illustration of the way in which our brains and hearts may be touched to finer issues by such surroundings.

As I quote these lines, fearful of some slip of a treacherous memory, I take a small volume of Keats from the shelf of old books. It is a battered little copy in green cloth, with the comfortable aspect of having been abroad with some loving companion in a summer shower. It is the copy long used by Tennyson, and evidently worn in his pocket on many an excursion. He once handed it to Mr. Fields at parting, and it was always cherished by the latter with reverence and affection. Here, in its quiet corner, the little book now awaits the day when some new singer shall be moved to song in memory of the great poet who loved and treasured it.

Many years ago it was our privilege to see Leigh Hunt in London, and to make a traveller's slight acquaintance with the interior which had inspired Keats. In response to a note of invitation, a portion of which is reproduced here, we drove to Hammersmith, where he

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meantime I send to said "kindly reader" some verses which I translated once from Marot, and which, I believe, are not in the American edition of my poems; though I begin to think, they might as well have been there as some others.

To a Lady who wished to see him.
(From the French of Marot)

I.

She loved me, as she read my books,
And wished to see my face;
Grey was my beard, and dark my looks;
They lost me not her grace.

2.

O gentle Heart, I noble brow,
Both mighty, did not these see:
For this poor body, failing now,
Is but my jail, not me.

3.

Those eyes of thine found hope beyond,
And vigour in my age;
And saw me better there in truth,
Than through the mists of eye.

Thus you see, my dear Sir, you must still excuse your not coming here without waiting for arrangement. They make no return for any kind, but treat me as in long respected old friend; for so am indeed long sincerely yours, Leigh Hunt.

Part of a Note of Invitation from Leigh Hunt.

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was then living. He was an old man with snowy hair, contrasting in this respect with the portrait in these pages, which was taken in the year 1815, at the request of Vincent Novello, just as he was leaving prison. But his eyes were still brilliant, and the fascinating grace of his manner was unimpaired. He was naturally rather tall and of a slender figure, but incessant daily toil at the desk caused him to stoop somewhat, though his son says of him, "He was straight as an arrow and looked slenderer than he really was;" but this was in earlier years, before time and toil had left their impress.

At the period of our visit, Leigh Hunt had reached his seventy-fifth year, and had long ago moved away from the pretty cottage at Hampstead. He was then living in a small house — one in a block of wooden buildings, if my memory serves me — which presented few external attractions either to a worldly or æsthetic observer; but Leigh Hunt was there, with his elegance and charm, like a prince in hiding. The same treasures were around him, too, which lighted Keats's fire of song. The Greek

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casts, "Sappho's meek head," "Great Alfred's too," "and Kosciusko's;"

> "Petrarch, outstepping from the shady green,
> Starts at the sight of Laura; nor can wean
> His eyes from her sweet face."

There they were, treasures indeed, when we remember that Keats opened his dreamy eyes upon them and found in them the motive of his verse; in themselves they were but a few casts, a few engravings, a few sketches in color, a number of well-worn books, with windows full of flowers, and no heavy draperies to keep away heaven's light. The fresh white muslin curtains swayed in the summer breeze as Leigh Hunt talked, and the enchantment of his discourse captivated us as surely as it had done for so many years all those who had come into personal relation with him. We forgot the tea-table and forgot the hours, while he introduced us to his daughters, to his flowers (he called them "his gentle household pets"), and to his latest literary interests and occupations. He wore the dignity and sweetness of a man not only independent of worldly ambitions, but of

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The Birthplace of Shelley.

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one dependent upon unworldly satisfactions. There was no sense of defeat because he was a poor man, nor of inadequacy, except for lack of time and strength to frequently "entertain strangers." He wore the air of a noble laborer — ceaseless, indefatigable; and when we remember that the wolf was driven from his door through so long a life by his busy pen, a pen unarmed with popular force, he might well feel that the struggle had been an honorable one. In referring to his flowers, which were just breaking into clusters of bloom, he fell into a revery in talk upon the mystery and ministry of beauty in the world, a subject which he has made peculiarly his own; but he soon strayed into the beloved paths of literature, and then indeed everything else was forgotten. His daughters tried in every way to decoy him to the table, but in vain, until at length they ran off with half his audience, when he soon followed.

Wherever Hunt lived, flowers seemed to have been his inseparable companions. In his younger days when in prison, he papered his walls with a trellis of roses, and caused plants

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to be put before the barred windows. They were as characteristic companions as his books. He managed to have a wonder of a garden also within the prison limits, and he says of it: "There was a little yard outside the room, railed off from another belonging to the neighboring ward. This yard I shut in with green palings, adorned it with a trellis, bordered it with a thick bed of earth from a nursery, and even contrived to have a grass-plot. The earth I filled with flowers and young trees. There was an apple-tree, from which we managed to get a pudding the second year. As to my flowers, they were allowed to be perfect. Thomas Moore, who came to see me with Lord Byron, told me he had seen no such heart's-ease. I bought the *Parnaso Italiano* while in prison, and used often to think of a passage in it, while looking at this miniature piece of horticulture:

'Mio picciol orto,
A me sei vigna, e campo, e selva, e prato Baldi.'"

It seemed the most natural thing possible to hear Leigh Hunt talk of Shelley and Keats as

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if they had just closed the door by which we had entered. There was the very couch, perhaps, where Keats lay down to sleep, after, as he says, straying "in Spenser's halls;" for they had no room for him, we remember, and he was made to rest there among the books; and there, when he awoke, were

"Might half slumb'ring on his own right arm,"

and those other mysterious shadows of his poem.

Hunt said, in talking of Shelley, "It was not in him to hate a human being; but I remember being startled once by his saying, 'Hunt, why is it that we all write love-songs? why shouldn't we write hate-songs?' And he said he would some day, poor fellow! I believe, however, that he really did dislike the second Mrs. Godwin, because she was incapable of telling the truth, and he used to say, when he was obliged to dine with her, 'that he would lean back in his chair and languish into hate.'" It was interesting, too, in view of the unsatisfactory portraits and busts of Shelley, to hear Leigh Hunt say that "no one could describe him,"

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and that he always seemed "as if he were just alit from the planet Mercury, bearing a wingèd wand tipped with flame."

Although our visit to Leigh Hunt was within a few months of his death, the native elasticity of his mind and the living grace of his manner were undimmed. He wore no aspect of the coming change, and the wan appearance of the portrait affixed to his Autobiography was so foreign to our memory of him that Mr. Fields has inscribed above it, "I saw Leigh Hunt in 1859, and this portrait bears no resemblance to the poet as I saw him. J. T. F." There is no Leigh Hunt now to enchant, and no Keats to be enchanted among the old books; but as we stand silently in the corner where the volumes rest together, watching the interchanging lights thrown through green branches from the shining river beyond, we remember that these causes of inspiration still abide with us, and that other book-lovers are yet to pore over these shelves and gather fresh life from the venerable volumes which stand upon them.

John Sterling said, many years ago, "They only find who know where to look." It was

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a skilful eye as well as a loving hand that brought this collection of books together. It is not one of the well-equipped libraries of a rich man, and we are sometimes led to think, in these later days of accessible public libraries, that it is a mistake to multiply books, with their attendant care, in private houses; but "My Friend's Library" is a collection of volumes which the collector himself read and loved, interspersed with such treasures as I have hinted at—books which have belonged to other writers, and been loved by readers whose very names are sacred.

The shelves near which we have been pausing are dedicated especially to Leigh Hunt's books. He was himself the prince of careful readers, enriching the pages as he passed over them with marks and comments which will serve to indicate passages of subtile meaning or noble incentive to all those who follow him while the books remain.

The history of the transfer of these volumes to our shores is easily told. "It is amazing," Dickens used to say, as if he were perceiving something nobody had ever thought of before,

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Miss Whitney's Bust of Keats.

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"it is amazing what love can do!" And it was love for Leigh Hunt personally which really brought these books of his to America. Although the best of readers, he was a man who believed in a generous use of books, and he lent and gave them away as if he were almost indifferent to their preservation. Those which were dearest and most useful somehow clung about him, yet the number of broken sets of valuable books among his collection is almost incredible. Such as they were, however, Mr. Fields desired to have them, and they were all despatched to him soon after Leigh Hunt's death. There were about four hundred and fifty volumes altogether, and of these Mr. Fields kept less than two hundred. "I was foolish not to have kept them all," he often said in later years; but at the moment many persons appeared who expressed great enthusiasm about them, and it seemed like a kind of selfishness to keep them all. More than half the collection was scattered, and many have changed hands more than once since that time. We do not like to think of them wandering about homeless, or possibly finding shelter in some second-

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hand book-shop, gazing helplessly from unloved shelves.

The interest which hangs about this little group, thus snatched as it were from oblivion, is sufficient to detain us in this paper. A happy chance brought us to this shelf; let us not wander just now farther afield.

Leigh Hunt's association with the men of letters of his time was close and single-hearted. No man ever held more firmly to the path he had chosen. He was, as I have said, continually at his work. To call a man of his tastes and temperament no lover of pleasure, would seem strangely inconsistent; but his pleasures were taken in Shakespeare's forest, in Spenser's palace, in Cowley's garden, in Herbert's church. He need not leave his own fireside for his finest enjoyments, and it was seldom indeed that Lord Holland or anybody else could lure him away from his writing-desk to the dinner-table. He was no diner-out; nevertheless, he became the intimate of the most interesting men of his time. He was the friend and biographer of Byron, he was greatly beloved by Shelley, and we have already seen how much he con-

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tributed to the happiness of Keats. He loved Shelley more deeply than the rest, and saw him much more intimately; but Carlyle, Hazlitt, Lamb, and Barry Cornwall, and the Novellos, not to mention other famous writers, musicians, and artists of his day, were all upon friendly terms with him. Once only did we meet him at dinner, at Mrs. Procter's. It was a memorable occasion. Adelaide Procter, Hawthorne, Charles Sumner, Kinglake, and other celebrities were present; but Leigh Hunt's winning aspect and delightful talk made the occasion truly sympathetic and agreeable. I can recall, as we left the table, Barry Cornwall putting his arm about Hunt's shoulder, as they went up the stair, with the affectionate look of one who saw his dear friend only too rarely. Indeed, we were afterward told it was the last time he dined out in company.

His social spirit is shown by the manner of his reading. He could never keep the good things to himself. He was truly "The Indicator" and "The Seer" for those who were to read after him. Up and down the pages run notes and marks to attract the attention of the

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unwary. No fine epithet, no delicate allusion, no fitting word, was lost upon his sensitive ear. We cannot help touching the pages with veneration which have been read, re-read, and

Barry Cornwall.

made precious by signs that serve as intellectual guides to the mind.

The books relating to Leigh Hunt in this collection may be divided into two groups:

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first, those of his own writing; and, second, those from which he often drew his inspiration, the books he loved to feed upon, his best companions. It is interesting to stand in this way, as it were, between the student and the author, on the ground between the conception and the finished work. By following his footsteps through the books he loved, we gather new light upon these companions of the mind, and at the same moment we gain fresh appreciation of Hunt's own peculiar talent for making the antique seed-grain bloom again.

In looking over the works of any true poet, and such Leigh Hunt undoubtedly was, we must in justice seek to know him in his poems; for, however well a poet may write prose, we must search his poetry to learn his most sincere expression and to discover that capacity, if he have it, for rising above his subject, which is a necessary quality of all good writing.

In Leigh Hunt's books we can often discover the suggestions and inspirations of his poems. It might be so, perhaps, with many another poet if we could find just such another reader. But he may be called an imprisoned singer, not

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alone in those years when he was actually shut in prison walls, but by reason of his constant confinement to his desk because of the necessity for continual toil. Many of these hours, too, in his ripest manhood, were passed in the prosaic labor of a newspaper man's office. He found his refreshment and compensation in books. "The Story of Rimini," redolent as it is of Italy, was written in his London prison, long before Italy was anything but a dream to him. It is far from wonderful that the poem is no better; the wonder is that it has life at all.

Hunt's love of Italy was very early awakened, and we have a delightful glimpse of him as a boy, first learning Italian at Christ's Hospital with his friend Barnes. It was a time of intense enjoyment. "We went shouting the beginning of Metastasio's 'Ode to Venus,'" he says, "as loud as we could bawl, over the Hornsey fields, and I can repeat it to this day from those first lessons."

Here is the large old copy of "The Novels and Tales of the Renowned John Boccaccio, the first Refiner of Italian Prose: containing A Hundred Curious Novels, by Seven Honorable

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Ladies and Three Noble Gentlemen, Framed in Ten Days." It was printed in London in 1684, and bears upon the first fly-leaf the following inscription:

"To Marianne Hunt—

"Her Boccaccio (*alter et idem*) come back to her after many years' absence, for her good-nature in giving it away in a foreign country to a traveller whose want of books was still worse than her own.

"From her affectionate husband,

LEIGH HUNT.

"August 23, 1839.—Chelsea."

Boccaccio was one of Leigh Hunt's prime favorites, and there is another copy in different form close at hand. This time it is in two small leather-covered volumes printed "in Venezia," in the year 1542. The autograph inscription on the title-page is as follows:

"These volumes are presented as a slight but heartfelt acknowledgement for the kindnesses received by John Wilson from Leigh Hunt Esqre.

"December 3d 1840."

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To

Marianne Hunt

Her Boccaccio (alter et idem) come back to her after many years' absence, for her good nature in giving it away in a foreign country to a traveller whose want of books was still worse than her own.

From her affectionate husband, Leigh Hunt.

August 23. 1839. — Chelsea.

The Inscription in Marianne Hunt's Copy of Boccaccio.

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Unhappily Leigh Hunt's copy of Dante is not among the old books; perhaps it never came to America. I only find three volumes of Commentaries on the Poets of Italy, which were evidently useful books to him, and the Memoirs (in English) of Alessandro Tassoni. Near these stand his own two volumes of "Stories from Italian Poets," which are dedicated to Shelley. They are in the form of a summary of the great works by the five principal narrative poets of Italy—Dante, Pulci, Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso—and they prove to us at least the careful study he had bestowed upon Italian literature. Many of the most precious of Leigh Hunt's old books are associated with that portion of his life passed in Italy; chiefly, in our minds, perhaps, because Shelley and Keats, his dearest friends, died there, and because his friendship for Shelley ripened upon Italian soil. There are three of these books standing in a row, which must be looked upon especially with reverence, I believe, by all lovers of literature. The first is an illustrated copy of Shelley's poems, the one edited by Mrs. Shelley and dedicated to their

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son, after Shelley's death, in 1839. It bears upon its title-page the following inscription:

Joseph Severn.

"To Marianne Hunt on her birthday, Sep. 28, 1844, from her loving husband Leigh

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Hunt." This edition contains two interesting portraits of Shelley, and a picture of Field Place, in Sussex, where he was born; also an etching of the cottage in which he lived at Marlowe, and two different views of his burial place.

There is also laid between the leaves of this book, at the opening of the "Adonais," a letter from Joseph Severn, of whom Shelley says in his preface to the poem (as all the world forever will remember): "He (Keats) was accompanied to Rome by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, 'almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend.' Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from 'such stuff as dreams are made of.' His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his

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From Severn's painting, "Ariel on the Bat's Back."

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illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!" In Severn's letter, which is addressed to Mr. Fields in 1871, he says, "I confess that I live upon the past." He encloses a photograph of himself (and this also is inserted), taken from a picture made when he was but twenty-seven years old, adding, "My lanthorn jaws I do not send." It is by no means a disappointing face, but one full of gentleness and enthusiasm.

The mention of Severn's name leads me to other unpublished letters from him, containing further particulars of those early days when he was with Keats. To that period also belongs a picture which hangs near the books, of "Ariel on the Bat's Back," a fanciful and yet realistic bit of painting, giving a good idea of Severn's own ability at his ripest period. We learn the origin of his paper on Keats, written for the *Atlantic Monthly* of April, 1863, in a letter to Mr. Fields. He says, "At last I have performed my promise to you in writing a paper on Keats, which I now enclose. . . . You will be interested by the romantic incident in my Keats paper, of my charming

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From a drawing of Keats by Severn, in the possession of Mrs. Fields.

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meeting with the poet's sister in Rome, and that we have become like brother and sister. She lives here with her Spanish family; her name is Llanos; she was married to a distinguished Spanish patriot and author, and has two sons and two daughters, one of whom is married to Brockman, the Spanish director of the Roman railways. . . .

"I am glad you saw my posthumous portrait of Keats. It was an effort to erase his dead figure from my memory and represent my last pleasant sight of him." And in another letter, referring to the drawing of Keats reproduced here, he says: "I am your debtor, for you set me about a task so congenial that when my daughter saw me draw it she declared it was an inspiration and implored me to do her also a sketch of Keats. I am glad to assure you that it is a good likeness, and gave me delight even in this respect, in calling up his dear image."

The second, of the three interesting books already referred to, is an old brown leather-covered volume, which is more closely associated with Shelley and Leigh Hunt than any of the others. Shelley's generosity was unbounded,

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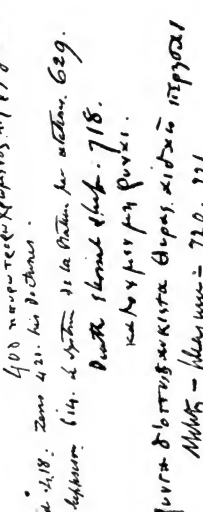

Inscription on the Fly-leaf of Diogenes Laertius, owned by Shelley and Leigh Hunt.

and in his eagerness to have Hunt share his enjoyments he would often part for a time even with his most precious books. The names

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of the two friends stand upon the fly-leaf of this copy of Diogenes Laertius. It is written in Greek and Latin, with double columns; but the notes, which appear to be all written by Shelley, are in Greek and English. Unfortu-

192 PLATO. Lib. III.

Iamdudum vivis lucebas lucifer, at nunc
Extinctus luces Hesperus Elysiis.

30) In Dionem vero in hunc modum:

Et lacrymas Hecubae, et Troianis fata puellis
Decreuere recens ex genitrice fatis.

At tibi post partos praeclaro Marte

From Shelley's Copy of Diogenes Laertius. (The lines prefixed to "Adonais.")

nately they are written in pencil, and are slowly but surely disappearing.

One of the first written is still legible: "*To read Diogenes again and again.*" Mrs. Shelley says of her husband: "His extreme sensibility gave the intensity of passion to his intellectual pursuits;" and we feel, as his eyes ranged over the splendid garden of the ancients

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which this book spread out before him, how the passion grew, and how the light of his spirit vivified the printed lines. He marked page after page for reference; poems rose before his fancy as he read, until at length the lines of Plato shone upon him which now stand as prelude to the "Adonais." They are from one of his epigrams upon his dead son Aster, and may be rendered into English as follows:

"Living, you shone as Lucifer in the morning sky;
Dead, you now shine as Hesperus among the shades."

But why translate them into prose, when Shelley himself has left them crystallized in the heart of an English verse!

"Thou wert the morning star among the living,
Ere thy fair light had fled;—
Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
New splendor to the dead." *

* I found the following translation of this verse among the Greek fragments of that unrivalled translator and poet, Edward Fitz-Gerald:

"Star of the morning shinedst thou,
Ere life had fled:
Star of the evening art thou now
Among the dead!"

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Percy Bysshe Shelley.

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It is no stretch of imagination to see Shelley with this book under the olive-trees on some solitary height, or floating with it as his sole companion in his fateful boat. His love for it was not a passing fancy; he seems to have lived with it for several years, as we find mention of it first in the year 1814, in Professor Dowden's deeply interesting biography. In that most miserable season when Shelley was in hiding from the bailiffs, Mary writes to him from her solitary lodgings: "Will you be at the door of the Coffee House at five o'clock, as it is disagreeable to go into such places? I shall be there exactly at that time, and we can go into St. Paul's, where we can sit down. I send you Diogenes, as you have no books." Professor Dowden adds in a note: "Probably a translation of Wieland's Diogenes;" but in a list of books read by Mary and Shelley during that year, a few pages further on, it is distinctly set down as "Diogenes Laertius."

In the "Adonais" we feel that Shelley's genius tried his bravest wing; and for the key-note of this great poem he found and marked the verses already quoted. Perhaps he saw

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from his mount of vision another star, his own, and knew that he soon should follow to the kingdom of the shades. "It was more than fifty years ago that this old book went wandering about the continent," Mr. Fields writes, "with the two young English poets, and was thumbed by them on the decks of vessels, in the chambers of out-of-the-way inns, and under the olive-trees of Pisa and Genoa."

Now it is at last safely housed, and with its plain brown coat, a hermit thrush among books, stands unsuspected in its quiet corner. By and by will not some other lover in some later age hear the voice again?

Standing next to Diogenes Laertius on the shelf, is the third volume to which we have referred, a book where Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats stand bound together, three in one, with Leigh Hunt's notes sometimes covering the margins. This book was a petted possession both of Hunt and its last owner. It is enriched with autographs of each of the authors, and upon the fly-leaf at the back Leigh Hunt has copied a poem written to him by Keats "On the Story of Rimini." This was

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Dear Sir Richard is a check for / fifteen
a few Shillings / to answer your bill
Can't you make the Booksellers subscribe
Even Mr Poem? Your most obliged Sr.
Jan. 16. 1818. Percy Bysshe Shelley

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sent originally to Hunt inscribed on the first leaf of a presentation copy of Keats's poems.

The pages of this volume also are worn at the edges, and, in spite of a second binding, it will afflict no lover of books by too great freshness.

There is a letter from Coleridge laid between its leaves, a feast one comes upon in turning them, as if quite by chance. It is "very characteristic," as catalogues say. There is one also by Shelley, a few pages further on, that is brief, and at first sight not at all characteristic. He writes:

"Dear Sir, Enclosed is a check for (within a few shillings) the amount of your bill. Can't you make the Booksellers subscribe more of the Poem?

Your most obedient serv.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

"Jan. 16, 1818."

The autograph of Keats in this volume is a part of the first draught of the poem, "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," the motto of which poem is a line by Leigh Hunt,

"Places of nestling green for poets made."

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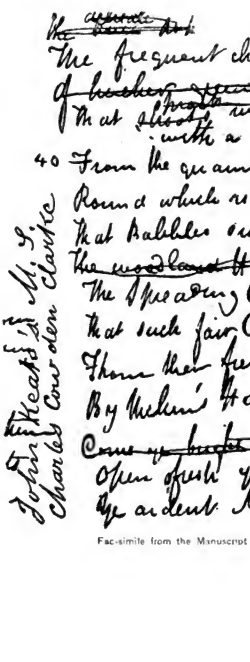

Fac-simile from the Manuscript of Keats's Poem, "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill."

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The autograph is marked as received by Mr. Fields from his friend Charles Cowden Clarke. The name of Keats's schoolfellow calls to mind a line from "The Eve of St. Agnes" for which Clarke was responsible. It seems, even in their school-days, Clarke had access to a piano; and in after years, when Keats was one day reading to him from the poem, which was still in manuscript, the line,

"The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone,"

"That line," he said, "came into my head when I remembered how I used to listen in bed to your music at school."

But Keats's autograph in this volume of the three poets is of unusual value; not only because it contains certain lines beloved by all readers of poetry, but because we gain a glimpse into the very workshop of the poet's brain. The lines now stand:

> "Open afresh your round of starry folds,
> Ye ardent Marigolds!"

But we see how he toiled after the perfected

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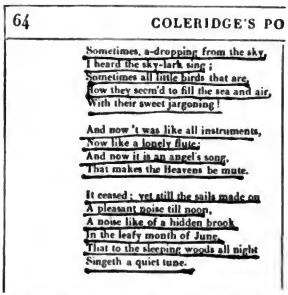
loveliness of these verses when we study his manuscript. He starts off,

"Come ye bright Marigolds,"

and then his impatient pen dashes out the


64 COLERIDGE'S PO

Sometimes, a-dropping from the sky,
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seem'd to fill the sea and air,
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 't was like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the Heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

From Leigh Hunt's Annotated Copy of Coleridge's Poems.

passage, and he begins again. At last the right words came, and he knew them and was content.

Writing of books, Charles Lamb says somewhere: "Reader, if haply thou art blessed with a moderate collection, be shy of showing it; or if thy heart overfloweth to lend them, lend thy books; but let it be to such an one as S. T. C.

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—he will return them (generally anticipating the time appointed) with usury; enriched with annotations tripling their value. I have had experience." In his turn, Coleridge receives in this volume the like tribute of annotation from Leigh Hunt. Line after line is underscored with an emphasis that will not let you turn the page till you have read them. The lovely passages seem to gain at least a double value from his signs of admiration.

It is dangerous to gather flowers in such fields! They rise in crowds about us, and we regret a seeming partiality. When we come to "Kubla Khan," hardly a line escapes Hunt's index; we seem to read certain things with him for the first time, and are startled by their wondrous beauty. "Youth and Age," "A Day Dream," "The Ancient Mariner," and "Christabel," are, of course, especially marked, as if he really could not contain his wonder and his delight.

In returning to Leigh Hunt's own poems, we are still able, as I have said, to trace the origin of many an inspiration back to these old books.

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Among his productions one of the first in value is certainly that beautiful brief story of Abou Ben Adhem. The matter of this poem lies like an embedded jewel in the *Bibliothèque Orientale*. We have only to read the two or three long prose paragraphs contained therein, giving the history of Abou, to wonder even more than ever at the transmitting power of Hunt's poetic pen. It is dull reading enough, compared with the poem.

The book, however, is a precious one, in spite of its prosaicisms, or perhaps because of them; for not only does it contain the seed-grain of "Abou Ben Adhem," but the suggestion of another of Hunt's best poems may be found in its pages. "The Trumpets of Doolkarnein" is a longer poem and far less known than "Abou Ben Adhem," but it was Longfellow's favorite among the works of Leigh Hunt. Of his copies of Theocritus, Redi, and Alfieri, all kindred spirits to his own, and inciters in his mind to fresh poetry, there is no room to write. Readers of Leigh Hunt's books will see how unaffectedly he delighted in these authors, and how much he drew from them.

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But before closing the volume of his own poetry, we must recall that charming rondeau about Mrs. Carlyle, who was so much more delightful a cause of inspiration than even our old books!

"Jenny kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in:
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad,
Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I'm growing old, but add,
Jenny kiss'd me."

In his Autobiography Leigh Hunt says, speaking of his school-days: "My favorite books out of school-hours were Spenser, Collins, Gray, and the *Arabian Nights*." This last he has italicized, and it is a pleasure to find his copy among these volumes; probably not the very same he read at school, but the one presented, as the inscription on the title-page tells us,

"To Vincent Leigh Hunt from his loving Father,"

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and the one Leigh Hunt read many times in his later years. It is filled with those delicate strokes of the pen which he loved to draw, not only at the side of a favorite passage, but under every word, until the reader can seem to taste the savor with which he devoured them. The "Arabian Nights" never lost their fascination for him. At the end of the fifth volume he writes the following note:

"Finished another regular reading of these enchanting stories, for I know not what time,—but after 'many a time and *oft*,'—September 26, 1836.

LEIGH HUNT."

He was then fifty-two years old. His notes in these volumes are extraordinary reading, because the childlikeness of his mind is so apparent in them. When he underlines a passage like the following, we feel how the wonder was still a fresh one as he read.

"When *the smoke was all out of the vessel, it reunited, and became a solid body, of which was formed a genie twice as high as the greatest of giants.*"

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He evidently disapproves of the editor of this edition (1811) because he is inclined to moralize: "Why can't you let us judge for ourselves," he writes once, almost pettishly, in the margin. Again, when, about midnight, "Maimoune sprung lightly to the mouth of the well, to wander about the world, after her wonted custom," Leigh Hunt writes, with droll gravity, on the leaf: "Fairy princesses, who live in wells, must be of a different order of royalty from those who inhabit subterranean bowers."

Nothing could be more characteristic or bring the poet before us in his true light more clearly than these fascinating notes. He takes it all so seriously, as, for instance, in these comments: "There is a curious mixture of noble and inferior taste in this description. The white pillars and embroideries of white and red roses on cloth of gold are exquisite; and the balconies fitted up like sophas and looking out into gardens are fit for them. Not so the shop-full of roses, the coloured pebbles, the gilt brass and the fighting birds. There is doubtless, however, a national truth in the picture which has

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an interest of its own." When the prince in the story "could not forbear expressing in his song that he knew not whether he was going to drink the wine she had presented to him or his own tears," Leigh Hunt's ready sympathy responds, "Graceful passion!!!" A serious reader of our commonplace days can hardly repress a smile at this enthusiasm in the man of fifty-two, but perhaps the smile should be a sigh that we are incapable of these festal days of fancy. He holds out well, too, through the six volumes, embroidering them impartially with his notes. He discovers that "the author of these tales and Ariosto both selected China as the country of the most beautiful women in the world! Angelica was a Chinese;" and he remarks, busy editor that he was, upon a description of the imprisonment of the Sultan's son: "Books, and an old tower, and quiet, are not the worst things that could have happened to him."

King Bedir says in the tale: "It is not enough to be beautiful; one's actions ought to correspond. . . ."

"It is curious," says Leigh Hunt, "that this

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sentiment is so often lost sight of by others who have adventures with the beautiful fairies that figure in so many of these tales. The Eastern beauty seems allowed a certain quantum of rage and cruelty as a sort of moral Pin-money which she may spend without being accountable for it." "This picture," he writes on another page, "is in fine keeping;—a palace of black marble, a melancholy lady at a window, with torn garments, and a black cannibal for the master of the house."

"An Oone!" he exclaims again. "An addition to one's stock of beings! Pardon me Oone for forgetting thee. The pleasure of seeming to see thee for the first time ought to procure my forgiveness."

But I must have done with copying these tempting notes, tempting because I seem to see Leigh Hunt again as I knew him in the flesh and heard him speak. For Ali Baba's sake, however, we must be forgiven one more extract.

"Hail, dear old story, in coming to thee again for I know not the whatth time! But why must our friend the editor, among his

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other changes (all painful even when right), be so very particular, and contemptuous of old associations, as to think it necessary to convert the word 'thieves' into 'robbers'? 'The Forty Thieves,' that was the good old sound, and for my part I will say Forty Thieves, still, and forever, however I may be prevailed upon to write Alla-adi-Deen for Aladdin and Kummir al Zumman for Camaralzamen; *and I do not think after all that I will do that.*"

Leigh Hunt's book, "A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla," is an excellent illustration of the way in which he utilized his reading. In the very first essay of the volume, the one entitled "A Blue Jar from Sicily and a Brass Jar from the 'Arabian Nights;' and what came out of each," he skilfully draws from the two jars, the one of blue china, which recalled Sicilian seas, and the one of brass, which recalled the Ufreet, such an epitome of the spirit of Theocritus and of the "Arabian Nights" that we enter perfectly for the moment into the circle of their delicate illusions.

"In consequence of the word 'Sicilian,' by a certain magical process the inside of our blue

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jar became enriched beyond its honey. . . . Theocritus rose before us, with all his poetry. . . . Johnson says that Milton and his friend were not 'nursed on the same hill,' as represented in Lycidas; and that they did not 'feed the same flock.' But they were, and they did; . . . and very grievous it was for them to be torn asunder, to be deprived by death of their mutual delight in Theocritus, and Virgil, and Spenser." Leigh Hunt found Theocritus to be "a son of Ætna—all peace and luxuriance in ordinary, all fire and wasting fury when he chose it. He was a genius equally potent and universal." In support of his doctrine he brings both virile and lovely things from the blue jar, and quotes enough to persuade us to his belief. There is a translation of "The Feast of Adonis," to which the Syracusan gossips go and listen to the song of a Grecian girl, which shows his poetic hand:

> "Go, belov'd Adonis, go
> Year by year thus to and fro;
> Only privileged demigod;
> There was no such open road

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For Atrides; nor the great
Ajax, chief infuriate;
Nor for Hector, noblest once
Of his mother's twenty sons;
Nor Patroclus, nor the boy
That returned from taken Troy;
Nor those older buried bones,
Lapiths and Deucalions;
Nor Pelopians, and their boldest;
Nor Pelasgians, Greece's oldest.
Bless us then, Adonis dear,
And bring us joy another year.
Dearly hast thou come again,
And dearly shalt be welcomed then."

With respect to the brass jar, the reader is called upon to remember how "eighteen hundred years after the death of Solomon a certain fisherman, after throwing his nets to no purpose, and beginning to be in despair, succeeded in catching a jar of brass. . . . He took a knife and worked at the tin cover till he had separated it from the jar. Then he shook the jar to tumble out whatever might be in it, and found in it not a thing. So he marvelled with extreme amazement. But presently there came out of the jar a vapour, and it rose up

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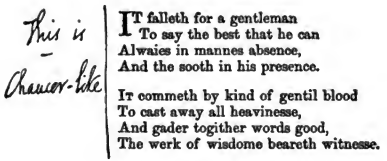
towards the heavens, and reached along the face of the earth; and after this the vapour reached its height, and condensed and became —an Ufreet. . . ." "Here," says Leigh Hunt, "is an Ufreet as high as the clouds, fish that would have delighted Titian (they were blue, white, yellow, and red), a lady, full



One of Leigh Hunt's Annotations.

dressed, issuing out of a kitchen wall, a king, half-turned to stone by his wife, a throne given to a fisherman, and a half-dozen other phenomena, *all resulting from one poor brazen jar*," with which indeed his own fancy has achieved wonders.

It is by reading after Hunt and observing the way in which his mind played over a variety of

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subjects, that we recognize the truth of Carlyle's tribute when he called him "A man of genius in a very strict sense of the word, and in all the senses which it bears or implies."

If it were only by the token of his enthusiasm, by the power of lighting his torch at the great shrines and of inspiring others, Leigh Hunt's name should be held in remembrance; and it is with a feeling akin to pity that we see him mentioned in a late life of John Keats as a man of "second-rate powers." We feel pity for a writer who, in unfolding the loveliness of Keats's genius, has allowed his eyes to be blinded towards his friend and contemporary. That Hunt's gifts were second to those of Keats, no one can deny; but that they were second-rate powers in themselves, the record which he has left in his Autobiography and other works must forever disprove.

Among the volumes of the English poets upon our shelf formerly belonging to Leigh Hunt, we find his Chaucer thoroughly marked and annotated. "He was one of my best friends," he said once. At the end of the eighth volume he has written: "Finished my

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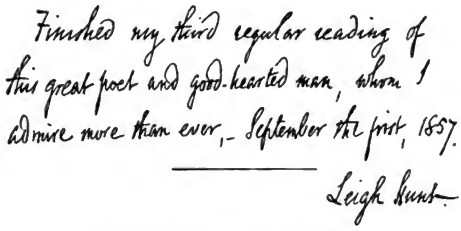
third regular reading of this great poet and good-hearted man, whom I admire more than ever." The Chaucer notes are too full and too minute to be quoted, especially as in his "Specimens of Chaucer," collected in "The Seer," we find much of the material digested and pre-



Written at the End of Leigh Hunt's Copy of Chaucer.

served. It is seeing, as it were, the first rush of feeling in which the notes were written which makes them interesting to decipher, but his published essays contain the gist of his recorded thought.

His copy of Ben Jonson is a quaint possession, full of new suggestions. But Ben Jonson with Hunt's notes is sufficient for a paper by

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itself, and in spite of the temptation to follow his lead in such pleasant pastures, we must pass on; yet we cannot help rejoicing with him over striking passages, as we quickly turn the leaves; for instance where, in the "Masque of Queens," he marks:

> "I last night lay all alone
> On the ground to hear the mandrake groan."

I find one profitable bit of Hunt's autobiography on the margin of his copy of Boswell's Johnson. He says, in reference to a passage describing Johnson's "dejection, gloom, and despair," "I had it myself at the age of twenty-one, not with irritation and fretfulness, but pure gloom and ultra-thoughtfulness,—constant dejection; during which however I could trifle and appear cheerful to others. I got rid of it by horseback, as I did also of a beating of the heart. I had the same hypochondria afterwards for four years and a half together. In both cases I have no doubt that indigestion was at the bottom of the disease, aggravated by a timid ultra-temperance. I never practised the latter again, and the far greater part of my life has

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been cheerful in the midst of my troubles. I have, however, not been a great or luxurious feeder, and I have been cheerful on system as well as inclination. My childhood was very cheerful mixed with tenderness; and I had many illnesses during infancy. I think I owe my best health to the constant and temperate regimen of Christ Hospital. During both my illnesses the mystery of the universe perplexed me; but I had not one melancholy thought on religion."

When we recall Johnson's criticisms of Milton's poetry, the following note is agreeable to our sense of truth. It is written upon a page where Johnson has been saying that "had Sir Isaac Newton applied himself to poetry, he could have made a fine epic poem; *I* could as easily apply to law as to tragic poetry." "Surely the company must have been laughing here," says Leigh Hunt. "Could Johnson, who had no ear, have made a musician? With no eye, a painter?"

But no seductions by the way should lead to the copying of these notes apart from the text, especially while so long a row of books stands

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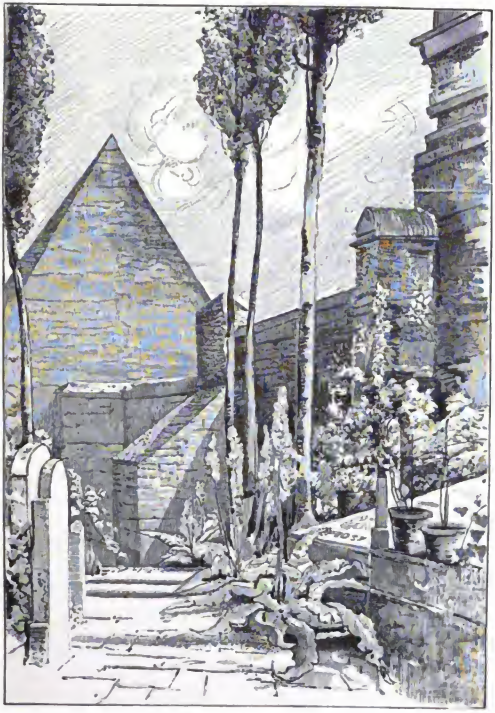

The Grave of Shelley, in Rome.

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unmentioned and beckons us to give them at least a nod of recognition.

Of Leigh Hunt's copy of Milton, Mr. Fields writes: "I am pained to observe in my friend's library several broken sets of valuable books. One of her copies of Milton, of which author she has some ten different editions, has a gap in it, which probably will never be filled again. Gone, I fear, forever, is that fourth volume, rich in notes in the handwriting of him who sang of 'Rimini' and 'Abou Ben Adhem.'"

Boston's long-loved teacher, George B. Emerson, used to say to his pupils, "Lending books is a most expensive luxury." In consequence of this indulgent temper, Hunt's Milton stands shorn of the fourth volume, containing a part of "Paradise Lost." The volumes that remain are much interlined and commented, but we miss the first and second books of the great poem all the more because he has so enriched the portions that are left to us. "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" he considers "the happiest of Milton's productions." We can easily understand how congenial their loveliness would be to Leigh Hunt. He especially ob-

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serves in "L'Allegro" the passage containing the lines:

> "While the ploughman near at hand
> Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
> And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
> And the mower whets his scythe,
> And every shepherd tells his tale
> Under the hawthorn in the dale."

Warton in a note reminds us that the "late ingenious Mr. Headley suggested that the word *tale* does not here imply stories told by shepherds, but that it is a technical term for *numbering* sheep." Leigh Hunt adds: "This explanation would probably be rejected by most young readers at first, as interfering with their Arcadian luxuries; and might even be unkindly regarded by older ones for the same reason: but it will be adopted by every grown reader of poetry at last."

The line

> "Bosom'd high in tufted trees,"

was evidently a favorite; also those,

> "Untwisting all the chains that tie
> The hidden souls of harmony."

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Of "Il Penseroso" he says: "This word ought always to be spelt *pensieroso*, and not in its present way, which is certainly not the common one with Italian writers, and I am told is not to be found in them at all."

Many books still look at us from Leigh Hunt's group, and there are interesting things for book-lovers still to be found among them. There is his copy of Plato's "Republic;" of Emerson's "English Traits," the notes in which gave Emerson himself much amusement; Carlyle's "French Revolution," and others. Sadi, and the English poets, and Sterne were all evidently favorite reading. There is a freshness like that of a June rose in Hunt's delight in good books to the very end, and the same freshness is to be found in his own work. We are sorry to think that he is not much read or known by the younger generation, and perhaps if it were understood how little the term "old-fashioned" applies to him, he would be more eagerly sought. Many a young lover of books would sympathize with the writer, if the pages of "Imagination and Fancy" were once opened in a quiet corner.

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He was himself compact of imagination and fancy, and his autobiography is a book which is pretty sure to be safe against the great robber Time. Whatever detraction Leigh Hunt suffered, the bird still sang on, in spite of finding himself caged and in spite of the clipping of his wings.

His father was a British colonist in America at the time of our war for independence, and took the side of the loyalists with such fervor that he nearly lost his life. He fled to Barbadoes, and afterward to England, where he lived a strange wandering life with his wife and children. One may say with truth that Leigh Hunt's misfortunes began long before he was born. His life was in strange contrast to that of the other distinguished poets of his time. He had, what they had not, a hand-to-hand fight with poverty from the beginning to the end of his long life, and although he was the intimate friend of Byron and Shelley and Keats, and well known to the rest of that shining group, his "problems" were unlike theirs, and his term of struggle one that lasted into old age. They died early, having won

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name and fame; but Leigh Hunt drank the bitter cup of existence to the dregs. All the more, therefore, in spite of the harshness of personal and literary criticism, it is a genuine happiness to the reader of to-day to discover a few beautiful and enduring poems which will embalm his name forever; and still further, to recognize his leadership in letters, by which other men are brought to the fountain of inspiration and sustainment.

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EDINBURGH

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Scott. (From an original unpublished drawing in chalk by Stuart Newton, now in possession of Mrs. George D. Howe.)

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EDINBURGH

As we find ourselves quitting one shelf of old books and turning to another, we seem for the moment to be leaving behind us Leigh Hunt, Shelley, and Keats, three names to conjure with, three presences from which we turn unwillingly. But near by we see the names (we were on the point of saying the faces, so real these familiars are to us) of the men who have made Edinburgh forever one of the best beloved of all cities.

Samuel Rogers once said: "The most memorable day, perhaps, which I ever passed was in Edinburgh—a Sunday, when after breakfasting with Robertson, I heard him preach in the forenoon, and Blair in the afternoon, then took coffee with the Piozzis, and supped with Adam Smith."

During more generations than we can reckon

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here, Edinburgh held her high preëminence, and if the tide of life has swept at length too strongly toward London, the maelstrom of England, a brooding mantle of remembrance will always hang over Edinburgh and make her landscape beautiful. A glance at any time toward this corner of the library will bring back the face and voice of Dr. John Brown, the author of "Spare Hours," of "Rab and his Friends," and of "Pet Marjorie." The book that stands nearest to our hand happens to be a copy of Byron's "Don Juan," and I can see the book again as I saw it first, standing in Dr. Brown's library at 23 Rutland Street, the spot which of late years, after the home of Sir Walter Scott at 39 Castle Street, has become the place in all Edinburgh where the feet of pilgrims to literary shrines love best to linger. It was a true doctor's house, and reminded me of a New England Boston home of thirty years ago. The humanities were all alive in it, and the de-humanizing quality of much of our high art in drawing-rooms had not found its way there. Plenty of books covered the walls on their plain unenclosed shelves, and other literary curiosi-

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ties besides the "Don Juan" had found an appreciative resting-place upon them. This volume is indeed a curiosity. On the side is printed in gold letters:

Lord Byron's Copy.
Don Juan
Cantos III. IV. V.

and two branches of laurel cross their stems beneath the inscription.

Inside Dr. Brown has written his own name and the following words:

"August 1864 given me by Caroline Scott. June 18th 1869

To James T. Fields
from his friend
J. B."

Turning the leaf I find still another inscription, as follows:

"The writing on the opposite page is by the hand of Lord Byron.

John Murray Jan 25 39"

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And on the opposite leaf Byron has written:

"The Publisher is requested to reprint (provided the occasion should occur) from *this* copy —as the one most carefully gone over by the Authour. The Authour repeats (as before) that the former impressions (from whatever cause) are full of errours. And he further adds that he doth kindly trust—with all due deference to those superior persons—the publisher and printer—that they will in future—*less* misspell —misplace—mistake—and mis-everything, the humbled M.S.S. of their humble servant.

Oct^{r} 26th, 1821"

After this ungraceful peroration Byron proceeds to make such corrections as seem good to him throughout the pages with his own hand.

As I have said, there were many other interesting books in Dr. Brown's own collection, for he was the true son of his father, into whose reverent hands such things were always gravitating—but he was also one of the most generous of men, as those of us have good reason to know who look over this shelf of books. He

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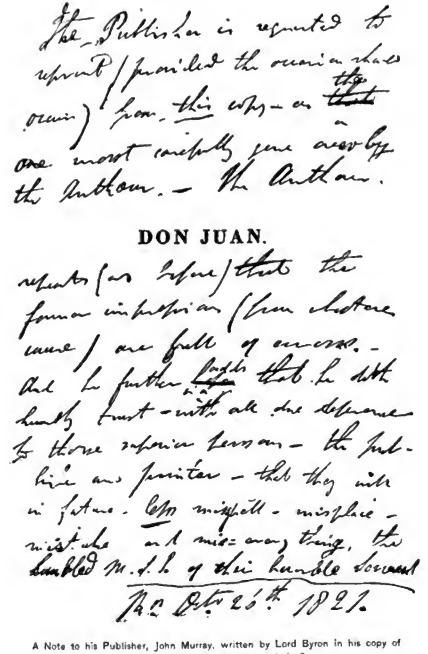

A Note to his Publisher, John Murray, written by Lord Byron in his copy of "Don Juan." [Reduced fac-simile.]

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was aware what he was doing when he gave away one of his treasures, his regard for them being an inheritance not only from his father but also from his great-grandfather, the famous John Brown of Haddington. Chief among his treasures he held to be a certain Greek Testament, concerning which he has said: "I possess, as an heirloom, the New Testament, which my father fondly regarded as the one his grandfather, when a herd-laddie, got from the Professor who heard him ask for it, and promised him it if he could read a verse."

This chief possession, inherited thus directly, was accompanied by others from the paternal shelves. He tells us that his father began to collect books when he was about twelve years old, and that among his treasures were "Ulric von Hutton's autograph on Erasmus's beautiful folio Greek Testament, and John Howe's (spelt How) on the first edition of Milton's Speech on Unlicensed Printing;" also a very interesting copy of Baxter's Life and Times which had belonged to Anna Countess of Argyll, with a note in it of historic value, besides her autograph. The old story thus renews

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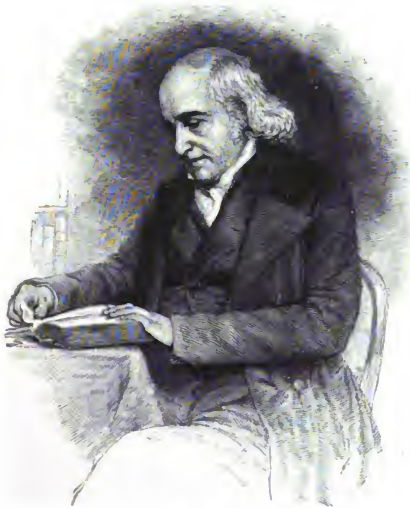

John Brown

Rev. John Brown, father of Dr. Brown.

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itself, and we must go behind a perfected personality like Dr. John Brown's in order to understand it. Even as I sit, with the photograph before me of his full-length figure holding his dog, and the memory of his presence clearly before that "inner eye," the pen still delays and hesitates in the attempt to describe him as he was. The fine skull, the tender in-seeing eyes, the firm mouth yet ready to break into fun with one of the earliest or latest Scottish anecdotes, all this we see and hear, and yet fail to portray him to those who knew him not. One of the books which he gave us in the early days of our friendship was the biography of his father by Dr. Cairns, a book which true lovers of biography even at this date may pore over with absorbing interest; and among his own published papers, as we all remember, is a letter of gratitude to Dr. Cairns containing reminiscences of his father, which came too late to be included in Dr. Cairns' book. In these we find the seed-grain of much that is in his own nature, the foundation of his own faiths and tastes. Even in the portrait of his father we see,

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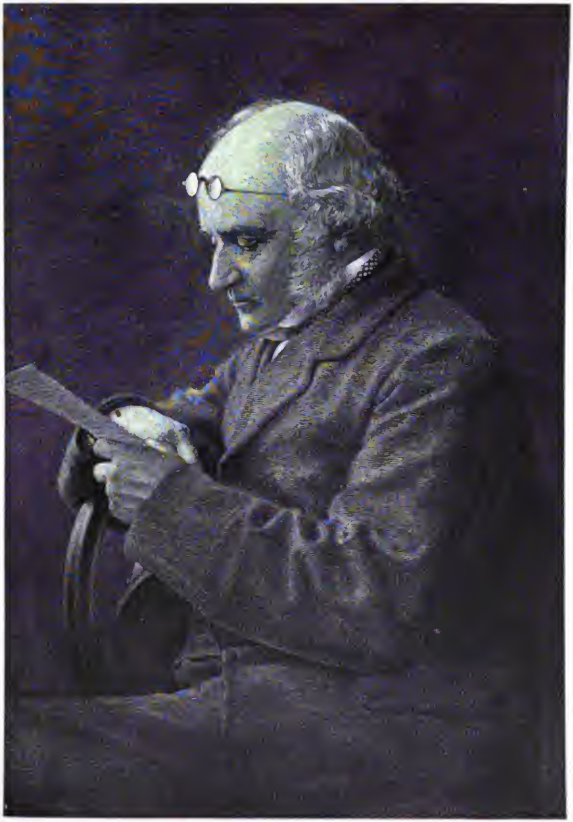

Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh. (After a photograph from life.)

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though they were such different men, a great likeness. The famous preacher and scholar had not the brawny Scottish physique which might well serve a man ready to engage in this most difficult of all professions, but he possessed on the contrary a constitutional refinement of body as well as of mind, and was capable of intense self-excitement and of consequent silence and self-withdrawal, if not of actual depression. "There was a fountain of tenderness in his nature," writes Dr. Cairns, "as well as a sweep of impetuous indignation." Might this not be said of the author of "Rab" as well? "The union of these ardent elements . . . not untouched with melancholy," the biographer continues, "with the patience of the scholar and the sobriety of the critic formed the singularity and almost the anomaly of his personal character." This too was the nature of his son, but there was also a love for others, a homely drawing to his kind which distinguished him from his father, and which endeared him in turn, not alone to those who knew him, but to all who read him. He speaks of remembering well how his father

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would sit up by night, after his mother's death, and pore over his books while he lay tucked away in the warm bed. "My father's bed was in his study, a small room, with a very small grate. . . . I can remember often awaking far on in the night or morning, and seeing that keen, beautiful, intense face bending over these Rosenmüllers and Ernestis, and Storrs and Kuehnoels—the fire out, and the gray dawn peering through the window; and when he heard me move, he would speak to me in the foolish words of endearment my mother was wont to use, and come to bed and take me, warm as I was, into his cold bosom."

"Warm as I was:" perhaps these words describe his nature better than more studied phrase. He seemed born to cherish this warmth both for man and beast, and when he grew to manhood he loved to gather the lonely and the suffering to his breast, as his father once gathered him. And when Dr. Brown quotes Sir Walter Scott calling for "Pet Marjorie," and saying, "Where are ye, my bonnie wee coodlin' doo," we feel that he himself would have called Marjorie with those words, and

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Marjorie Fleming. (After the water-color portrait by her cousin Isabella Keith. By consent of David Douglas, Esq., Edinburgh.)

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would have gathered her so into his own bosom. Calm and quiet as Dr. Brown was in appearance, a critic, too, by education, a man subject to dark periods of depression during the last twenty years of his life, no one could approach him, either man or dog, without that sense of a warm human breast open and ready to shelter and make warm.

One day in the early summer of 1860, we took the morning train from Edinburgh to Melrose. A heavy shower was falling that rendered the prospect for a day out of doors rather disappointing; but we were so full of interest in everything around us that we took little heed of the weather. At one of the way stations, a kindly, breezy man leaped hurriedly into our carriage, nodding to us in a cheerful fashion, and then almost without pause he began a friendly talk, catching speedily at the idea of what would chiefly interest us as Americans. "Can you tell us anything of a man in Edinburgh who has written a book called 'Horæ Subsecivæ'?" we asked. "Oh, yes," he replied, "he is my brother, and I will give you a note to him with pleasure." But almost

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as suddenly as he came he leaped out of the carriage again and was away, for he too was a busy physician like the Edinburgh doctor. At evening, however, when our sight-seeing was finished and we were about to return to Edinburgh, we saw him waiting at the station with a "good speed" for us and with the letter in his hand.

And thus we found ourselves shortly after at Dr. Brown's tea-table, with the family, not forgetting his friendly doggie "Dick."

I can well recall how rich we felt as we came away after that first visit; rich first of all in his friendship, and again rich in the memory of good things which had fallen from his lips, rich above all with that sense of a generous nature which gives and gives and still hath all. I remember that Mr. David Douglas was present and helped to make the occasion agreeable, for Dr. Brown was a man of "infinite humor" and full of anecdote, and he and Mr. Douglas added Scottish wit to Scottish tale till the time could hold no more.

Even then a great shadow had fallen upon Dr. Brown, and the new thoughts which were

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awakened by this visit and the little excitement seem to have been helpful to him. He wrote two letters on the following day to his new friends, in the first of which he confesses to have lain awake a good part of the night thinking over many things, but adds, in his own kindly fashion, "we had not been so happy for many a day."

In this same letter he adds something which may be considered a dramatic episode indeed for autograph lovers: "I am quite sorry that I cannot give you the manuscript of 'Rab.' Only three days ago I found it in my desk and threw it into the waste basket, and by this time it is in ashes and up the chimney."

It was not until January of the following year that he wrote to us about his wife's health in unmistakable terms. He said: "My dearest is still with us, but going down more and more into darkness; sweet and good and full of love, but almost beyond the reach of our love. In the story of Rab the words, 'Why was that gentle, modest, sweet woman, clean and lovable, condemned by God to bear such a burden,' are her own. They occurred in a letter to me

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about Ailie; how terribly true they now are of her own beloved self. . . . I go about in a dream, but the stroke will come some day and awake me."

Two or three months later he again referred to "the great sorrow under which we lie, in the loss of the reason of my dear wife. She was away from us when we saw you. . . . One of the last things my dear wife enjoyed, and parts of which she repeats, was Whittier's 'Witch's Daughter.'

"Often I heard her saying, gently to herself:

> 'And the winds whispered
> It is well.'"

Among the books given to us by Dr. Brown are two volumes containing the Essays and Lectures of his cousin, Samuel Brown. It was through Ralph Waldo Emerson that his name was first made known to readers in Boston. Mr. Emerson possibly became acquainted with Samuel Brown as early as the time of his first visit to Carlyle, for the father of Samuel was a distinguished man in his day, a "Secession" minister and a native of Haddington.

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I well remember the sense of awe which came over me when Emerson described this brilliant creature, of whom his cousin says: "His letters and his journal, and above all, his living voice and presence, could alone tell what was best in him; there was a swiftness and a brightness about his mind and its expression such as we never before witnessed; its penetrative, transmitting power seemed like that of lightning in its speed and keenness. With this brightness, and immediateness and quickness of mind, there was great subtlety—a power of expressing almost impossible thoughts, of working upon invisible points, which was quite marvellous—; . . . a venatic instinct for first principles, a sort of pointing at them as a dog does at game; 'that instinctive grasp,' as has been finely said, 'which the healthy imagination takes of *possible* truth;' and along with this a hard, remorseless logic, and a genuine love and practice of *method*, in its Coleridgean sense, as distinguished from *system*."

All this Emerson had recognized in the man, and he joined in the ranks of those who stood

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about Samuel Brown, waiting the success which seemed sure to follow his scientific theory and labors. He was candidate for the chair of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh when he was twenty-six years old, but before the time for his election arrived a large company of learned men were invited to witness his experiments to prove "the proposition of the isomerism of carbon and silicon." I can never forget Emerson's manner, the pain and wonder with which he described the utter failure of these experiments. It was a failure which meant ruin to this fair fabric of a life. All his learning and noble conduct were blasted with a breath. It was doubtless unjust, it was terrible, but it was the decision of the world, and it was final. Samuel Brown died at the early age of thirty-nine, withdrawn from public life, and suffering great physical agony. Dr. Brown says: "Time and the hour, which brings the sun up into the heavens, will doubtless bring him likewise into his just place. But we cannot help recording our unvarying confidence in the speculative truth of his doctrine, and his own solemn assertion of this with his dying hand in his

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private journal; and though we speak as unlearned, we must affirm our original conviction of the essential truth of his doctrine of the unity of matter, and consequently of the possible, and, it may be, provable, transmutability of the so-called elementary bodies."

Not a word is said in print anywhere, I believe, of this great sorrow, for such it was to a large Edinburgh circle, but we can read between the lines and understand the scene as Emerson described it. The contrast is sharp indeed between the picture of the defeated scientist and the man of whom Dr. Brown says: "It would not be possible to indicate to any one who never saw him, or heard his voice, and came under the power of his personality, in what lay the peculiarity of Samuel Brown's genius;—all who knew him, knew it,—none who did not, can. He was not so much cleverer or deeper than most men,—he was quite different; it was as if a new flower had grown up, which no one ever before saw, and which no one looks for again."

All this Emerson had seen, and none had felt more deeply; but later came that contrasting

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hour of the self-imposed test and the sudden failure which, for reasons inexplicable to us now, bore a sense almost of disgrace, so high had been the hope, so futile the attempt to prove it. But Samuel Brown still had great happiness left him in his private life. He had married his cousin, "and this," writes Dr. Brown, "was his greatest earthly blessing." To her we owe these books. They are doubtless helping to pave the way for other discoverers, but much of the great learning they contain must be already as matter sloughed off from the new creature.

Dr. Brown continually recurs to this brilliant frustrated career. He says in one of his letters: "I send you a notice I wrote for *The Scotsman* at the time of George Wilson's death. The part about Samuel Brown will interest you." And again: "You will see in the article on my cousin in the *North British* an extract from a Diary he kept. I believe that Diary, if Mrs. Brown would permit its publication, would give the world a better idea of what Samuel Brown's genius was than anything of his that has hitherto been published. . . . Here he

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was too much the prophet at home, and therefore not honored as I think he deserved. . . ."

There is still another book on the shelf connected with the old Scottish days and Dr. Brown. It is a discourse by Nathaniel Culverwel, edited by the Rev. John Brown; a book of which Sir William Hamilton said that "Culverwel did not deserve the oblivion into which he has fallen." Perhaps not, but has the world discovered any method for recovering whatever may fall into the waters of oblivion? Dr. Brown wrote of it: "If you can find a young Jonathan Edwards, he would relish the non-conformist, neo-Platonist." But we have not found him yet, and the compact volume stands gathering dust to dust.

As the mists and dark gathered about Dr. Brown's later years he wrote fewer letters, and though always with the same affectionateness yet with a cloud over his spirits from which he sometimes found it impossible to rally.

"I am doing nothing now," he wrote, "but drudge and doctor—my little vein seems worked out, and I am too much involved in daily work, and too dull and careless now that my compan-

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ion is gone, to make myself do anything with my brain." But this mood was disease in part; occasionally the clouds would lift, and he would write in a more cheerful vein. Of Dr. Holmes he says in one of his letters: "If Voltaire had been good and a New Englander he would have thus written. There is the same mastery of style, which means not only a *point*—but means the point of a pyramid, the broader the deeper in. . . . I wonder how that brain burns so unconsumingly; is there a bit of asbestos in the hippocampus minor?"

In a yet gayer mood he wrote again of his dogs: "Don has been succeeded by a huge young English mastiff with a tawny hide, close and short like a lion's. A muzzle as if dipped in ink, and a pedigree as thoroughbred as Lord Derby's. I call him KENT, partly from his county—partly because I always think Lear's faithful servant was a sort of human mastiff. He is of Lord Kingsdowne's breed, and as good a dog as his Lordship is a lawyer."

It is hard to cut the letters of a friend, and harder yet where the subjects of which he

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writes are so full of interest to many people, but his own books recall us to the shelves where the various editions of "Horæ Subsecivæ" are to be found.

These "Spare Hours" of a physician's life are, after all, the work by which he will be remembered in this world. The power and tenderness of the written page touch men from afar as his healing hand could touch them in the chamber of suffering. These are all the world can have who did not know him, and how much they are! these "bits" and "scraps," as he so often called them. His larger record lies hidden among the secrets to be revealed in the Great Future.

A smaller book next attracts our attention, in dark covers neatly lettered, "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life." It is a volume of brief sketches by John Wilson, and one which will outlive many of the more voluminous books of his later years. The name of Francis W. P. Greenwood is inscribed in a careful hand-writing within, with the date 1823. Bostonians will not love this copy the less that one of her

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most spiritual and best beloved ministers of the old King's Chapel owned it, loved it, and turned its pages.

"Christopher North" was one of the most striking figures which even the streets of Edinburgh, wonted to the figures of unusual men, had ever seen. De Quincey used to say of him "that it was good to dwell in his shadow." Mr. Fields said that the Opium-eater being one of the smallest of men in stature, and Wilson taller and broader than his race, he supposed the little man felt a physical security beside him. "I remember," he continued, "that De Quincey described to me a visit he once made with the Professor to Paris. His account was full of droll situations; and one of the incidents left on my mind was the recital of an encounter between young Wilson and a Frenchman. 'We were sitting in the theatre together,' said De Quincey, 'when to my surprise a quarrel arose between my companion and a stranger on the other side next him. The Frenchman became so obnoxious that Wilson begged him to be quiet until the play was over, when they could step outside the

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John Wilson ("Christopher North").

theatre into an alley hard by, and settle the dispute.' 'And did they go out and arrange the misunderstanding?' I asked. 'Oh, yes,' said

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De Quincey. 'And what was the result?' De Quincey looked up in his mild and pensive way and replied with great solemnity and composure of muscle, 'The Professor closed both the little Frenchman's eyes, and thus eliminating his vision, the combat ended.'"

John Wilson was one of the few great men whom Mr. Fields saw in his first boyish run through Europe. The young American had already acquainted himself with the incomparable tales contained in this small volume, and probably suspected their author to be the editor of *Blackwood's Magazine*. He appears to have known him also even then to be the writer of the "Noctes." The Professor received him with great kindness at his house in Edinburgh, and in the course of the interview undertook to show his young guest how the Irish shillalah should be used. Finding his movements circumscribed and the wild fling rather dangerous in his study, he opened the front door, and bidding his guest follow him to the sidewalk, then and there proceeded to lay about him with the stick, entirely oblivious of passers-by and their comments. "Chris-

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topher North" was always free and unconscious in his bearing and appearance. He usually wore a flannel shirt entirely open at the throat, and when he was among his Westmoreland hills the country people often met him of a morning with even his shirt thrown back from his brawny shoulders.

Sir Henry Taylor, who met him once or twice in Edinburgh, says: "He looked like one of Robin Hood's company; or he might have been Robin himself—jovial but fierce—as if he would be the first at a feast but by no means the last at a fray; full of fire and animal energy, and of wit and sarcasm, and hardly seeming to heed anybody about him—a man who has always been the king of his company. Moral philosophy was never taught by a wilder or more fiery Professor, and he was certainly by far the most considerable man I met with at Edinburgh."

There is a beautiful old copy of the "Decamerone" upon the shelf, given by Wilson to Leigh Hunt, with a friendly word or two written inside, and a letter from him also which I find laid within a copy of the "Vestiges of

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Creation."* Robert Chambers, through whom this letter of Christopher North came into our hands, says that it was given him, for Mr. Fields, by Professor Wilson's daughter, Mrs. Sheriff Gordon. "It is a very good letter," Mr. Chambers writes, "of that extraordinary genius," being one which he addressed to the wife of Mr. Solicitor General Rutherford on his daughter's marrying Mr. Gordon, who was the

* This book, the "Vestiges," was almost as great a source of wonder in its time as The Letters of Junius, or "Waverley" itself. It appeared at a moment when the study of geology had made a narrow faith in the letters of the first chapter of Genesis impossible, and while the world was still rent with dissensions upon the subject. The concluding note of the book says: "Thus ends a book, composed in solitude, and almost without the cognizance of a single human being, for the sole purpose (or as nearly so as may be) of improving the knowledge of mankind, and through that medium their happiness. For reasons which need not be specified, the author's name is retained in its original obscurity, and in all probability will never be generally known. . . . The book, as far as I am aware, is the first attempt to connect the natural sciences into a history of creation. The idea is a bold one, and there are many circumstances of time and place to render its boldness more than usually conspicuous. . . . We give, as is meet, a respectful reception to what is revealed through the medium of nature, at the same time that we fully reserve our reverence

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nephew of that lady's husband. "By the way," Mr. Chambers continues, "Mrs. Gordon is writing a memoir of her father, to be published by Edmonston & Douglas, of Edinburgh, and I hope you will deem it a work suitable for reprinting at Boston. I have a great faith in the memoir-writing powers of women—witness Lady Holland's life of her father, Sydney Smith, and the sketch of Lord North by his

for all we have been accustomed to hold sacred, not one tittle of which it may ultimately be found necessary to alter."

The learning and common-sense of the book, its rare temperateness and wisdom, commanded immediate attention. It was the wonder of the world at that period, nor was the authorship ever acknowledged, I believe. Therefore it is sincerely interesting to find in Leigh Hunt's copy traces of the authorship and to know that Mr. Fields settled it definitely upon Mr. Chambers at last.

The brothers William and Robert Chambers are indissolubly connected with reminiscences of Edinburgh. I remember seeing them both in their native city while the elder brother was Lord Provost. Robert was our kind cicerone through his beloved haunts. No one should fancy it possible to see Edinburgh properly without a reference to his admirable "Walks about Edinburgh," but to have the knowledge fresh and yet uncoined from the author's brain was an excellent preventive to imperfect sight-seeing.

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daughter in Brougham's 'Statesmen of the Reign of George III.'"

In this letter, which is now safely transferred to the Edinburgh edition of Wilson's Life, Christopher North writes: "Mary's marriage will be a sacred solace to her afflicted father,

William and Robert Chambers.

and to know that she possesses the affection of her husband's dearest friends infuses a feeling of peace and joy into my desolate and too much disturbed heart. Her mother loved John Gordon—so do I—and if the Blest see those they have left, her spirit will be well-pleased to look down on their united life."

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Mr. Fields often recalled the scene (though I think it must have been described to him afterward by one of the students who was present, perhaps Dr. John Brown) when Wilson came to resume his duties at the University the next session after the death of his wife. He began to speak to his class as usual, but feeling the sympathy of the young men he stopped and his head sank upon the desk. Presently he rose again and said: "Gentlemen, pardon me, but since we last met I have been in the valley of the shadow of death." The crowd of students, the breathless waiting, the tender confidence to them, was something never to be forgotten after hearing it described as from an eye-witness.

Mr. Fields was present at some one of his lectures, however, and he always said in after life that Professor Wilson's method and manner with his students was his ideal of what the relation of a teacher to his scholars should be. The eager way in which he talked to them, his whole heart being in his work, made it impossible for their thoughts to wander. They were fascinated by his living interest in their behalf.

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"Ah, that is what lecturing to students can be made," he was accustomed to say.

I have found a few manuscript notes by Mr. Fields descriptive of Wilson, and among them the following paragraph in which we see how keen and quick were his literary acumen and his energy:

"It was young John Wilson who first gave to Walter Scott the title of 'The Great Magician,' by which name he was afterwards known to all the world! It was young John Wilson who pointed out, in the pages of the *Edinburgh Review*, the beauties of 'Childe Harold,' long before the voice of universal acclamation was heard in the land; and he was one of the first to recognize the genius of Charles Dickens. At the age of seventeen he sent off a letter of several sheets to William Wordsworth, then unrecognized and hooted at by the reviewers, thanking the obscure poet up among the hills of Westmoreland for the ardent enjoyment he, a lad at school, had derived from a perusal of 'The Lyrical Ballads.'"

Professor Wilson's home at Elleray was wonderfully beautiful.

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John Wilson's Home at Elleray.

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"All Paradise
Could by the simple opening of a door
Let itself in upon him."

De Quincey thought it incomparably the finest terrace view in England or Wales. We are inclined to think that De Quincey ought to have known, not only because he was a great wanderer, but because it is recorded of him that he once went to pass a day or two with Wilson at Elleray and remained nine months. "Now and then as I went down-stairs at seven in the morning," Christopher North said, "I would meet De Quincey coming up to bed with a candle in his hand. He was a gentle, courteous creature."

This singular visit of De Quincey at Elleray, where Wilson said he seldom saw him except thus in the morning, is much in keeping with Mr. Fields's own experience with respect to him. In his first inquiries after De Quincey, of an old man in Edinburgh, the reply was:

"Ye've come to Edinbro' too late, sir! They're nearly all gone, noo! Many's the time I've seen Sir Walter Scott pass my door on his way to the court, and I got to ken the sound of

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his stick on the sidewalk as well as I kenned the voice of my ain wife! And there was Sir William Hamilton, the grand looking fellar, and Mr. Lockhart, Sir Walter's son-in-law, and little Mr. De Quincey, the great opium-eater as some said of him, and Lord Jeffrey, the powerful lawyer, and Professor Wilson, a match for any of 'em!"

This inclusion of De Quincey among those who were past and gone was one of the eccentric incidents which surrounded that man of genius. When Mr. Fields inquired for him more particularly, he was assured of his death, although "after a search," he writes, "I found him alive and well in a cottage ten miles out of Edinburgh. I inquired for him again in London in 1852, and authors and critics, with very few exceptions, were uncertain where he lived, and one, a man of mark, declared to me that he then heard his name for the first time."

It is already too well known for me to dwell upon it here, that the writings of Thomas De Quincey had never been collected until they were gathered together by Mr. Fields and printed in an edition of twenty-two volumes,

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published consecutively in Boston. This might well account for his being unknown in England by a busy writer, for "who read an American book" in those days? and these twenty-two volumes might be considered American, inasmuch as De Quincey had never signed his papers in the English Reviews, which were therefore only discoverable by their style.

De Quincey owned a large number of books, a part of which his daughters once told us were at a cottage in Westmoreland, called "Town-End," and others at Lasswade, near Edinburgh; but a man of his strange habits, who kept his letters and manuscripts in a disused bath-tub, was not likely to watch closely over his books. After his death they were sacrificed, "sold for nothing," in a heap in Edinburgh, before his friends could be informed upon the subject.

There is an interesting portrait of De Quincey, modelled in relief, hanging over the shelf of Edinburgh books, which gives something more of the imaginative quality in his face than the picture by Sir John Watson Gordon, although the latter is more generally known.

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There is a very thin volume also in the library containing a portion of his essay on Wordsworth in manuscript. The handwriting is delicate and refined as well as small and facile.

De Quincey. (From a bas-relief in the possession of Mrs. Fields.)

This, with some of his letters, is all the shelves can show of De Quincey's literary property; but as he was living when Mr. Fields went to Edinburgh in 1852, I find a few unpublished

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reminiscences of a personal interview at that period. "We had corresponded at intervals for many years," Mr. Fields wrote, "because the collection of his writings in America had been intrusted to my care. He had never been able to afford me any assistance in indicating his essays in the magazines, as he had forgotten their existence as well as their dates, and I was obliged to rely entirely on a recognition of his style and the topics likely to be treated by him.* I found him living in his little roadside cottage a few miles from Edinburgh, at a place called Lasswade, on the river Esk. He had sent me directions how to find him in a letter which I still preserve as one of the curiosities of literature. When he came out to receive me at his garden-gate I thought I had never seen anything so small and pale in the shape of a great man, nor a more impressive head on human shoulders. The unmistakable alabaster shine,

* My husband was always grateful for the coöperation of Rufus Choate in discerning De Quincey's style. Mr. Choate's universal reading and his appreciation of De Quincey's eloquence made him infallible in discovering any work of his hand.

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which I had noticed in other opium-eaters, was on his face, and the restlessness of his body also proclaimed his well-known habit. Next after his personal appearance I was struck with his exquisite courtesy. There was a finish and elegance in his diction also which recalled something of Leigh Hunt's manner, and belonged perhaps to a particular era. I need hardly say that the habits of my host at Lasswade were very eccentric. He soon began to describe, in the most solemn and deliberate manner, the nondescript animal which he said was forever gnawing in the interior of his body, forever moving, and forever busy at his ghastly work. It was profoundly sad to hear this wonderful genius, this master of all knowledge, talking at intervals such unreason, and with earnestness and power. . . . During a walk of fourteen miles which we took together, his mind would sometimes dwell on the past, and I remember the delightful history he gave me of those days among the hills of Westmoreland when his daily companions were Professor Wilson, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. He had much to say also of the har-

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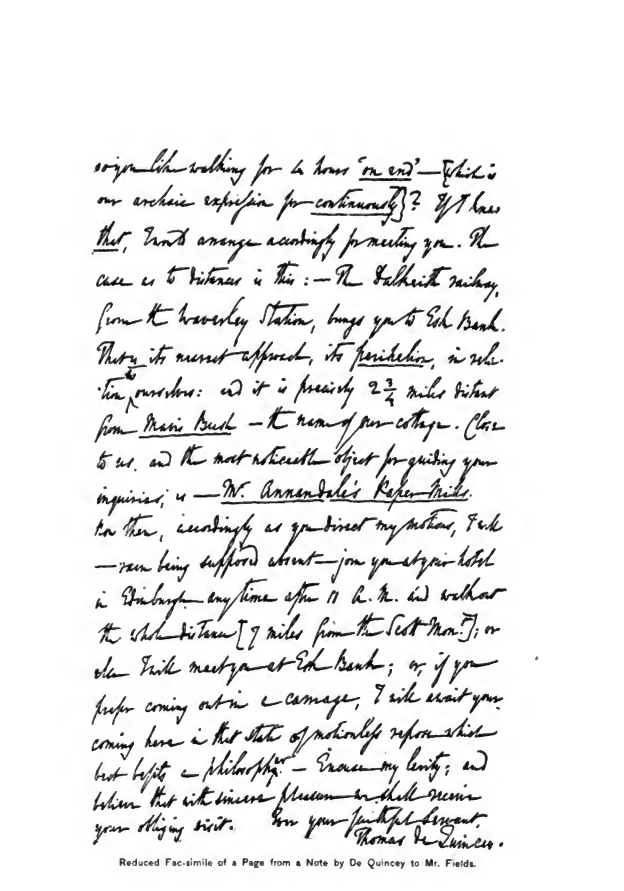

Reduced Fac-simile of a Page from a Note by De Quincey to Mr. Fields.

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monies of language, the perfection of finish in English prose writers who had passed into fame, and he quoted to me Goethe's saying, that the difficulty in composition lies not in learning but in *un*learning. Then he spoke of his own baffled efforts, his defeated hopes in life, of his unfinished work on the Human Intellect, which he had longed to leave behind him completed as his crowning effort. Many things, too, he said to me in confidence which cannot be revealed. If they were true they ought never to be recorded, and if they were only the dreams of opium they should be allowed to fade like the unsubstantial visions of a deluded brain. He spoke of Charles Lamb and Southey with love and tenderness, and when he mentioned John Wilson his eyes filled and his voice trembled.

"He asked many questions about America, and he understood the geography of our country better than any untravelled American I had ever met. Webster's argument in the Salem-White murder case he thought contained the grandest utterances ever made in a court of justice.

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"As we walked along, his manner became at times singularly nervous and startling. Not infrequently he spoke like a man who had seen ghosts, and there was a kind of solemn awe and wonder in his tone. Much of the time he walked bareheaded, as if his brain were hot and troublesome, and I noticed there was on his brow that signature of sorrow not uncommon to the sons of genius.

"He seemed to me to have accomplished nothing with his pen, great as his achievements have been, compared to the eloquence and greatness of his spoken words.

"When the time came for me to say 'good-night,' and return to Edinburgh, De Quincey, who had been talking all the evening in a strain of unequalled interest, began the prelude to a new theme. Although the carriage had long been waiting at the door, I was bound to hear and still lingered listening. At last, when the moment of departure arrived, De Quincey rose and said, in his solemn manner, 'I feel that at my period of life, and your home being three thousand miles away, the chances are against our ever meeting again. Send your carriage

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back to Edinburgh, and let us have a midnight walk to the city.' Not wishing to have him go so far as ten miles on foot, I proposed that he should then retire to bed and let me say 'farewell.' This he declined peremptorily, and I then agreed that he should walk a few miles on with me, the carriage following our footsteps. It was a black, misty Scottish night, and as we trudged along I could hear the Esk River roaring at our side. De Quincey entered upon a fresh theme the moment we got out into the dark open country. The sight of cottages and other dwellings closed and cheerless in the midnight gloom led him to speak of the household wrecks he had witnessed. Leading me up to the front of a large dilapidated mansion, as the wind whistled in at the broken windows, he described the hours of happiness he had in former years been accustomed to pass with those who had once dwelt in luxury within. Insanity, Fraud, Suicide, had entered at various epochs within these once radiant walls, 'and now,' said De Quincey, with a shuddering sigh, 'behold the conquest of sorrow!'

"We were many miles away from his own

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door and it was almost morning, when I took his hand for the last time, and under the shadow of the Scottish hills bade him farewell, as he glided off into the darkness toward Lasswade. I watched his slight figure, vanishing, reappearing, vanishing, until it was lost in the mist—faded forever from my vision.

"In after years when I stood by his grave in the Edinburgh churchyard and thought of his strange, struggling life, I recalled his own words about a battlefield that nature had long since healed and reconciled to herself under the tender oblivion of flowers."

There is one old brown book upon the Edinburgh shelf connected with Robert Burns. Who can think of Edinburgh without a vision of his beautiful unhappy face rising up before us, "a miserable and mighty poet of the human heart"? It is a copy of the first Edinburgh edition of his poems, the same for which the members of the Caledonian Hunt subscribed, taking one hundred copies, and which Burns said it gave him "so much real happiness to see in print." This copy was said to have been a gift from Burns to some woman, but I

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find no proof of this. It is interesting enough, however, with its list of grand names, and when we recall all the circumstances of its publication. A small edition of his poems had been printed the year previous at Kilmarnock, and the rapidity with which it sold was a good promise for his poetic future. There was a "reprint and fac-simile" of this edition brought out in 1867, of which, also, only six hundred copies were made, and one of these reprints fortunately is now here before me. There is here a manuscript letter, too, from Burns, addressed to Captain Hamilton, of Dumfries. It is a sorrowful letter enough, full of money troubles, and confirms what we already know of his misfortunes.

Burns in Edinburgh, with his new leather-covered book, now looking so old and according to modern ideas so unattractive, was at the summit of his life's happiness. Mr. Fields often told how Burns was seen at that time by Mrs. Basil Montague, who later, in her old age, loved to describe him. She was herself just entering society as a young girl, she used to say, when Burns was enjoying the first-fruits

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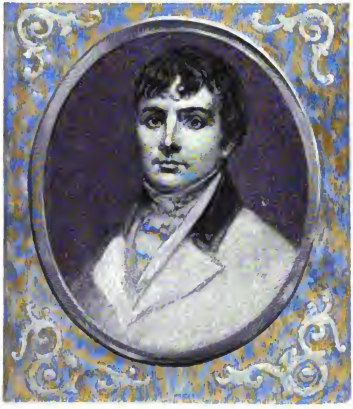
of his fame. "I have seen many a handsome man in my time," she would say; "but none



Robert Burns. (From a daguerreotype in the possession of Mrs. Fields—from a miniature.)

of them equalled young Robbie Burns. I never saw such a pair of eyes as flashed from under his noble forehead."

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Burns had by no means grown up ignorant of books. In his father's cottage there were many volumes famous in those days, which were well read by the young son, but of poetry, except Fergusson's and Allan Ramsay's, there was nothing, save a collection of ballads and songs owned by a strange old woman who lived with them. He did not forget his love for the two poets who had helped to nurse his young genius, and the first places he is known to have visited in Edinburgh were the lowly grave of Fergusson and the house of Allan Ramsay.

Among Mr. Fields's papers I find a page where he speaks of meeting one of the sons of Burns in London in 1859. "I asked him what made on him (as a boy) the deepest impression of his father's personality? He said, 'The sympathetic tone of his voice whenever he spoke to any poor person, any one poorer and more suffering than himself.'" It was from the hand of this son that we received the daguerreotype of Burns taken from a portrait still, I believe, in possession of the family.

Lockhart's description of Burns at this period

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Portrait of Ramsay. (From an edition of his poems published in 1751.)

in Edinburgh, as given to him by Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Fields used to say was the one he

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liked above all others. Scott was a lad of fifteen when Burns came up to receive the homage of his native country at the hands of all the distinguished men and women gathered in the classic city to welcome him. Young Walter was longing to see Burns, but as he had at that time small acquaintance with literary people it seemed as if he would never have the coveted opportunity. "I would have given the world to know him," said Scott to Lockhart, and at last fortune favored the young lad. One day Professor Fergusson invited some persons to meet Burns at his house, and among them came the boy who was afterward to equal even Burns in the affectionate consideration of Scotland. "We youngsters," says Scott, "sat silent and looked and listened." Some one was showing Burns an engraving hanging up in the room. It was a print representing a soldier lying dead in the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side, and on the other the dead soldier's widow with a child in her arms. Underneath the engraving these lines were printed:

"Cold on Canadian hills or Minden's plain,
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain,

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Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew;
The big drops mingling with the milk he drew
Gave the sad presage of his future years,
The child of misery baptized in tears."

Burns looked at the picture, read the lines, and burst into tears. He then asked who had written them. Nobody in the group except young Scott remembered the author's name, and he modestly whispered to a gentleman standing near that the lines occur in a half-forgotten poem by Langhorne. The gentleman mentioned the fact to Burns and revealed his informant's name. Burns bent his brimming eyes on the boy and rewarded him with a look and a word of thanks which Walter Scott remembered during his whole life.

Burns's love for Allan Ramsay leads us to take tenderly down from the shelf the two small volumes of his poems.

Ramsay died in 1757, and this edition was printed in London during his life, in 1751. They are quaint leather-covered books, with an unpublished autograph poem by Ramsay on the first page. He was very popular in his day, and stopped a gap before the time of Scott and

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Mrs. Lockhart, Scott's daughter.

Burns. He turned publisher, too, and became a rich man in spite of building a theatre and bringing righteous Scotland down about his head. But he established the first circulating

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Copy Missed -
Rem. 1st Jane's Chem. Jan 29-31. 1718. 6/ 7/ 21
To Mr Jane, Horse; Cuits Letter Signat. 1/ 2/ 19

Sir, Please two volume come to know
Your lord's gratitude and love.
To you, whose taste and judg'ment shine
Incapable without repine.
Whether in Plaided, Lord, or Laird;
For which and many a other, answer,
Nay find me to my last behaviour,
From this lonest heart of mine
Beg you accept this small propine:
Long I court the value, yet believe
If it is the best that I can give,
And the most proper, you'll allow,
For me, to give to such as you.
Then with a friendly smile admit
Me 'mongst your laughing friends to sit:
Nod your mitred head and gape
Like chanticleer upon the hilltop;
Make me a bow-kail, that I may
Crown it with Butter, Meat, and Joy;
That when the gleam, or angle that's sour,
Attacks you in a drunken hour—
With these did Allan come before ye,
And to your gayety restore ye—
If I in this can recommend
My muse to you, I've gained my end,
And if you own that I can snuff
A Scrap or Tale, nor dull nor doff,

Fac-simile of an Autograph Poem by Allan Ramsay, written on the first page of an edition of his poems

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library ever seen in Scotland, and many sins should have been forgiven him for that. His verses, which I will transcribe, show him to have been a man of wit and manners in his day.

Jan. 29-31.

To Mr. James Home, Writer to the Signet.

SIR,

These two volumes come to prove
Your poet's gratitude and love.
To you, whose taste and friendly spirit
Encourage the least hints of merit—
Impartially without regard
Whether in Shepherd, Lord, or Laird;
For which and many an other favour,
That bind me to my best behaviour,
I from this honest heart of mine
Beg you t'accept this small propine:
Though scant the value, yet believe
It is the best that I can give,
And the most proper, you'll allow,
For me to give to such as you.

Then with a friendly smile admit
Me 'mongst your laughing friends to sit:
Root yont your Milton and your Pope
That chant sublime from the hill-top;

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Make me a birth-*whin*, that I may
Crane in with Butler, Matt, and Gay;
That when the spleen, or aught that's sour,
Attacks you in a drumbly hour—
With these, did Allan come before ye,
And to your gayety restore ye—
If I in this can *recommend*
My muse to you, I've gained my end;
And if you own that I can *sowff*
A song or Tale, nor dull nor dowf,
At some with no small pride I'll sneer,
Whose noddles are not quite so clear,
And never tent their spitefull grumble
While you stand by your

servant humble,

ALLAN RAMSAY.

From my closet in Edr.
August 10th, 1735.

There is a spirited portrait by Smibert in the first volume, which gives me a desire to say with *Quince*, in "Midsummer Night's Dream,"

"Let us hear sweet Bottom."

We find in it such an aspect of ready speech. Leigh Hunt's name is on the first page, and his marks are to be found throughout wherever

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original beauty is to be recognized. One line I see,

"To waft their young white souls through fields of air,"

that is crystallized and will endure.

The "Gentle Shepherd," too, may well have won laurels in his day, and may still command a loving reader. Burns was once heard inquiring for the shop of the author of the "Gentle Shepherd."

The picture of Walter Scott in his interview with Burns leads us to turn to the goodly row of books which are precious because of their association with him.

The copy of the first edition of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" is a fine quarto bound in morocco and printed as beautifully as Scott's taste and the devoted care of his printer and publisher could devise. We can imagine the pleasure of the young American book-lover on his first visit to Edinburgh in finding this volume and making it his own.

It was fifteen years only after Scott's death that Mr. Fields first saw "the gray metropolis of the North" and "the castle proudly looming

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Scott. (From the portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence, painted for George IV. in 1820.)

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in the early sunlight," and was received by his "landlady in her nightcap at the top of the stairs." How speedily he was away again to Black's, the publisher, and afterward to Blackwood's, "seeing the portrait of John Wilson," and much else, we cannot doubt, it being still very early in the morning and these gentlemen hardly at their offices.

As soon as the coach could start he was away to Abbotsford. To his joy he found a Scottish lady on the top of the coach beside him who knew every inch of the ground, and had seen Scott when she was a child. She knew Lockhart, also, and pointed out all the hills and castles as she talked, and he was sorry indeed when the coach set her down at her journey's end. Soon, with hurrying feet, he found himself in Scott's library, "walled about with books," which he examined with loving scrutiny. He was deeply impressed with the care which had been given them, and recalled Lockhart's saying how full Scott's den in Castle Street was of quartos and folios "all in that complete state of repair which at a glance reveals a tinge of bibliomania. A dozen vol-

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umes or so, needful for immediate purposes of reference, were placed close by him on a small movable frame something like a dumb-waiter. All the rest were in their proper niches, and wherever a volume had been lent, its room was occupied by a wooden block of the same size, having a card with the name of the borrower and date of the loan tacked on its front. The old bindings had obviously been re-touched and re-gilt in the most approved manner."

We can imagine the incipient publisher peering about among them and revelling in the knowledge that this friend of youth everywhere, this romance lover and writer, this hero of his heart, should be a man to care so tenderly about his books.

I cannot tell at what "corner shop" he found this treasure on his return to Edinburgh, but he not only bought it, he also enriched it with whatever he could find to add to its value. He has laid in it an engraved copy of Chantrey's bust of Scott, and one of the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, and a note, also, written at the moment Scott was sitting for this portrait. Beside these there is a delightful picture

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My dear Sir

I have seen Shandelier Cant called on — Spencer Rogers to come to his assistance — & stated that he was dying & concluded abruptly with these words "they are throwing the things out of window" — The Memorialist ardently hopes Spencer Rogers will be out of his friends' clutches. I take these hours for my patience to Mr Thos Lawrence during which the whole conversation was filled up by Rogers with stories of Shandelier for the Country which of him he deserved the gal. ows.

Ever yours
Walter Scott

Apl 17th

Fac-simile of a Note from Scott.

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taken when Scott was a child of six years, and romantic pictures of his two daughters, by Nicholson; also engravings of Abbotsford and Dryburgh. But the charm of the volume after all lies in the fact that Scott himself assisted at

From a miniature of Walter Scott, made at Bath, in his fifth or sixth year.

this sumptuous début of his poem and rejoiced in its fitting dress; that he handled this very copy perchance, and pronounced upon the "tooling" of the covers, the thickness of the paper, and the kind of type. It brings us nearer to him, in short, than anything.

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One of the curious facts relating to Scott's books is the rapidity of their production, and Mr. Fields has made a note to the effect that "'The Lay of the Last Minstrel' was dashed off at the rate of a canto a week!" It seems that "Waverley," too, was written at the same white heat "in thirty summer evenings," and Scott somewhere says, in a letter to a friend: "When I once set pen to paper it walks off fast enough. I am sometimes tempted to leave it alone and see whether the pen will not write as well without the assistance of my head as with it."

The success of the "Lay" caused Constable & Co. to make Sir Walter an offer for "Marmion," which he had already begun. The sum they mentioned was so large as to startle the literary world—it was one thousand pounds. Lockhart says of this work: "'Marmion' was first printed in a splendid quarto, price one guinea and a half. The two thousand copies of this edition were all disposed of in less than a month."

Where the nineteen hundred and ninety-nine other copies may be I know not, but here is

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one of that edition before me as I write. This copy is also enriched by a portrait of the

Walter Scott, writer to the Signet, father of Sir Walter.

mother of Scott, Anne Rutherford, and a picture of Abbotsford in 1812.

At various times the first editions of the "Lady of the Lake" and "Rokeby" were added to our collection, and a copy in two

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volumes (also first edition) of Scott's "Border Antiquities." Scott evidently lost nothing of

Anne Rutherford, Scott's mother.

his pleasure in beautiful books as he grew older, for the last is one both author and publisher might be proud of. The fly-leaves are rich with inserted portraits and autographs.

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There was something in the wholesome humanity of Walter Scott which caused men and will long cause them to regard anything

Lady Scott.

which belonged to him, and even the spots he haunted, as sacred in their eyes. Since his day Edinburgh has become a shrine for pilgrims in

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a new sense. Men admired the beauty of its castle-crowned steep before he lived, and visited Holyrood and caught glimpses here and there of its historic interest, but from the moment he came upon the scene the whole historic material of the place was organized and vitalized anew. Dinner-table wits of his day said that Scott's talk was commonplace, but Lockhart once replied: "Yes, it is commonplace as the sunshine is which gilds the most indifferent objects and adds brilliancy to the brightest."

Adam Black once told Mr. Fields that when Scott came stumping along the road with his cane and his dog and raised his cheery voice it seemed as if his merry laugh cleared the whole air; and from an old man in Glasgow he gained still another peep at Scott's delightful nature and of his relations with men. It seems that this person had carried a law-case to him for adjustment. "How did he manage it?" Mr. Fields asked. "Oh, beautifully," said the old client. "He told me a bonny story aboot a coo and a calf in Dundee, and then he sent me over the way to a brither lawyer, who, he told

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me, had a langer head for sich affairs than himsel'. But it was a braw story that he told me aboot the cattle o' Dundee, and it makes me laugh to this day when I think on't."

But of all the delightful memories of Scott's power of love and sympathy none can outrun that beautiful picture of him given by Dr. Brown, as he bends over his belated Pet Marjorie where she sits in her little white dress in the dingy sedan chair in his "lobby," while he calls his friends from the supper-table to welcome her. "Sit ye there, my dautie, till they a' see you." Surely it is this gift above all the rest which makes us value the least trifle with which he had to do, the gift of which Matthew Arnold has said:

> "For will and energy, though rare,
> Are yet, far, far less rare than love."

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FROM MILTON TO THACKERAY

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Bust of Milton, about 1654.

(Reproduced from a photograph of the only mould of the original cast from life, preserved in Trinity College Library, Cambridge, England, which was taken by kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity.)

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FROM MILTON TO THACKERAY

In John Milton's "Speech to the Parliament of England" upon the "Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," he says: "Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as that soule was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a viol the purest efficacie and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. . . . Who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but hee who destroys a good book, kills reason it selfe: . . . slays an immortality rather than a life."

The "Areopagetica," * with its inequalities of

* DeQuincey says of the "Areopagetica": "It is the finest specimen extant of generous scorn. And very remarkable it is that Milton, who broke the ground on this great theme, has exhausted the arguments which bear upon it. He opened the subject; he closed it. And were there no other monument of his patriotism and genius, for this alone he would deserve to be held in perpetual veneration."

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diction and its immortalities of thought and expression, has been made to live again for modern readers by means of the introduction written for it by Lowell a few years ago, at the instance of the Grolier Club of New York. It stands upon the shelf, a very pretty and a very precious small volume with Lowell's inscription and alterations of his own text. As an example of Lowell's English style, and of the manner in which he has, within the small compass of an introduction, served to keep the "well of English undefiled," it is of inestimable and incomparable value to the modern world of letters. His criticism of Milton's character, as expressed in his style, is a distinct contribution to the history of the man; he has strengthened the arch of Milton's fame, and brought us closer to his personality. We feel a fresh kinship to the writer who, in times not wholly unlike our own, felt the public problems to be a weight of personal responsibility.

"As a master of harmony and of easily maintained elevation in English blank verse," writes Lowell, "Milton has no rival. He was" (*versed*, he first wrote) "skilled in many tongues and

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many literatures; he had weighed the value of words, whether for sound or sense, or where the two may be of mutual help. He, surely, if any, was what he calls 'a mint-master of language.' He must have known, if any ever knew, that even in the *sermo pedestris* there are yet great

Horton, Milton's Early Home.

differences in gait, that prose is governed by laws of modulation as exact, if not so exacting, as those of verse, and that it may conjure with words as prevailingly. The music is secreted in it, yet often more potent in suggestion than that of any verse which is not of utmost mastery. We hearken after it as to a

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choir in the side chapel of some cathedral heard faintly and fitfully across the long desert of the nave, now pursuing and overtaking the cadences, only to have them grow doubtful again and elude the ear before it has ceased to throb with them. . . . Milton is not so truly a writer of great prose as a great man writing in prose, and it is really Milton we seek there more than anything else." Therefore, because we seek Milton, we value the early editions of his works which are upon the shelf of old books. Dryden is said to have remarked, when the first edition of "Paradise Lost" met his eye: "The man cuts us all out, and the ancients, too." It is not unlikely that the quaint remark of Mr. S. Simmons, the printer, to his "Courteous Reader," upon the first page of this first edition, had in view Dryden and other celebrated writers and critics of that century. It may well have "stumbled" Dryden, who never freed himself from the shackles of rhyme, to read the stately blank verse of Milton for the first time. Milton lived largely "in a world of disesteem," and had grown somewhat hardy perhaps in the cold winds which brought him no fruit of approval

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POEMS, &c.

Thomas UPON Gray

Several Occasions.

Thomas Gray

Thomas BY Gray

Mr. JOHN MILTON:

Thomas Gray

Both ENGLISH and LATIN, &c.
Composed at several times.

Thomas Gray

With a small Tractate of

EDUCATION

To Mr. HARTLIB.

Thomas Gray

Thomas Gray: Thomas Gray

LONDON,
Printed for *Tho. Dring* at the *Blew Anchor*
next *Mitre Court* over against *Fetter*
Lane in *Fleet-street*. 1673.

T: Gray:

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from the harvests of the world. He wrote his prose with a stinging pen, and when music from the upper air came to him for transmission in verse he took no counsel from the nether sphere as to form or doctrine. His first appearance in letters was in the second folio of Shakespeare, where three anonymous tributes to Shakespeare's genius prefaced the plays. Milton and Ben Jonson wrote two of them. A small volume came somewhat later, in 1645, containing his early poems, the second edition of which, printed in 1673, lies before me. It belonged to Thomas Gray when a schoolboy, his name being written ONLY nine times by himself upon the title-page.

There have been innumerable editions of the "Paradise Lost" printed in every variety of luxury. In opening one large folio of some magnificence in book-making, printed in Glasgow in the year 1770, I find an apology for a new edition. Apparently the university and the university press had set their hearts upon doing a fine piece of work, and under the editorship of Dr. Newton they printed, bound, and sold, chiefly among themselves, the larger part of

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the edition. To the names of the Glasgow men are added those of a number of the most considerable personages of Scotland before the era of Sir Walter Scott. The list represents fairly well the great world of the North at that period, and the titles and well-known names add a conspicuous and interesting feature to this edition.

There is still another old book marked "very rare," a relic of the days of Milton; it is a copy of his "History of Britain to the Norman Conquest." The volume is labelled "first edition;" yet loath as a possessor of jewels must be to find that a diamond has been replaced by a stone of less pure water, I find myself unable to believe that this old book is a first edition at all! The date of its publication is 1677. Milton died in 1674, and this History of Britain was surely published in his lifetime. In the "Biography" we are told that it appeared first in 1670, seven years before the date of the book in my hand; also that the first edition contained a portrait by Faithorne. It is impossible now to say by whom the portrait was made in this, evidently, second edition.

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The painter's name is not upon the engraving, which is pasted in upon a fly-leaf. Doubtless some enthusiastic owner took it for granted that this was a "first edition," and therefore affixed a printed label with the announcement on the outside of the book below the title.

A very interesting edition of Milton's Poetical Works is the one in seven volumes, owned by Leigh Hunt, with his notes. On the whole, for the reader and lover of poetry this is one of the most delightful books possible. Leigh Hunt remembers what Keats and others have said by way of criticism, and in the right places their words are jotted on the margins. There is one more literary relic of Milton, an old folio of his prose works, printed in 1697; nothing could be more quaint, more clumsy, more interesting! Whether his speeches and pamphlets were brought together previously, or whether this is a first edition of them collectively, I cannot say. The titles and prefaces and heading are all evidently as Milton intended them to be, and we are invited into his very presence as we turn these old pages. We feel with Wordsworth:

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"We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spoke; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held——"

There is, however, an older book standing beneath this shelf than any which has ever stood upon it; it is one that fills me with a kind of awe as I look at it, yet which impels me to hold it with affection and to read its pages as I read no other "prophane" volume. This book is a copy of North's "Plutarch," printed in 1603; a book which Shakespeare knew and which he might have held. The strong leather cover has been patched, but perhaps not wholly remade. The bookworms have found their way through it, yet the pages remain clear as the day they were printed. The name of a former owner, who lived at Bramfield Hall, Suffolk, is slowly fading off the title-page, but the stately title itself is unchanged, and the name of "James Amiot, Abbot of Bellozane, Bishop of Auxerre, one of the King's privie Councell and great Amner* of France," who translated these lines of

* The Amner (presumably Almoner) was the highest ecclesiastical dignitary of France, to whom was given the superintendence of hospitals.

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the noble Grecians and Romans, out of Greek into French, appears in all its majesty, leading in the name of the great English translator, from French into English—Sir Thomas North, Knight. It is a most majestic old book, and one to be touched with reverence. It shows no disdain to the lover of pleasure. Amiot says to his readers: "The reading of books which bring but a vain and unprofitable pleasure to the reader, is justly misliked of wise and grave men. Againe, the reading of such as do but only bring profit, and make the reader in love therewith, and do not ease the paine of reading by some pleasantnesse in the same; do seeme somewhat harsh to divers delicate wits. . . . But such books as yield pleasure and profit . . . have all that a man can desire." Both the great Bishop and the English Knight fell in love with that book, and spared no labor to bring it to a worthy presentment; and to this day the readers of North's translation will feel themselves rewarded.

But we must confess it is not the general interest of the book alone which attracts us to

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this volume: it is the fact that Shakespeare is said to have fed his brain upon this story of Julius Cæsar and to have drawn his play therefrom.

We find concerning Cæsar that "he was often subject to headach, and otherwhile to the falling sicknesse (the which tooke him the first time as it is reported in Corduba, a city of Spaine)."

In the play of "Julius Cæsar," Cassius says of him:

> "He had a fever when he was in Spain,
> And when the fit was on him, I did mark
> How he did shake."

And again Casca says:

"He fell down in the market-place, and foamed at the mouth and was speechless."

"*Brutus.* 'Tis very like; he hath the falling sickness."

We know well that these maladies of Cæsar were a matter of history, but the likeness of expression is, at the least, remarkable.

In the old volume we find the story of the defeat of the Nervii, and that the Roman Senate

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decreed a sacrifice and solemn processions for fifteen days, having never made the like ordinance before for any victory; therefore, when Mark Antony, in the play, speaks to the people over the dead body of Cæsar and shows them his mantle, he tells them it was the one he wore on a summer's evening:

"That day he overcame the Nervii."

Also the tale is told of the feast Lupercalia, where Cæsar sat in a chair of gold and "Antonius was one of them that ranne this holy course; he came to Cæsar and presented him a diadeame wreathed about with laurel. . . . But when Cæsar refused the diadeame, then all the people together made an outcrie of joy."

The picturesque does not fail. We can see the kindling eye of a great poet passing from line to line and gathering up the story which was to be made permanent in the beauty of his imagination. The soothsayer is here; the "spirits running up and down in the night" and "solitaire birds to be seene at noone daies sitting in the great market-place."

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Further, we find in the old book that Cæsar, doing sacrifice unto the gods, found that one of the beasts which was sacrificed had no heart; and "that it was a strange thing in nature how a beast could live without a heart."

Shakespeare wrote:

"*Enter a* SERVANT.

Cæsar. What say the augurers?

Servant. They would not have you to stir forth to-day.
Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,
They could not find a heart within the beast."

And then the death of Cæsar with every detail, and the ghost that came to Brutus, all are here.

The more carefully we read and compare the texts, the more surely we discover that from these pages (possibly, wonder of wonders, from this page) the poet we name William Shakespeare drew the body of his immortal play of "Julius Cæsar."

We close the great covers reverently and put the silent witness back under the lighter shelf.

In Mr. Andrew Lang's pleasant book called "The Library," he speaks of the difficulty in these decadent days of picking up literary

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treasures, a thing so frequently done by those who knew, forty, thirty, and even twenty years ago. Nevertheless, we would whisper, let not those who possess the knowledge, and the opportunity of following the quest, lose all hope. Good things may be found even in these degenerate days! But thirty years ago, what might not be discovered by searching in London or Paris, and sometimes almost without the excitement of the hunt!

For instance, upon this shelf stands a beautiful copy of "Rasselas"—not a first edition, but one of the fine Ballantyne reprints of 1805, illustrated by Smirke, with engravings by Raimbach; quite good enough to make the eyes of the book-hunter sparkle.

Imagine the joy of the enthusiastic buyer, having left the shop, the book paid for and safely tucked under his arm, to find, as he turned into a quiet street to take a look at his new purchase, to find, I say, hidden between the leaves a letter in the well-known handwriting of Dr. Johnson himself.

It was almost too much to believe, and the question immediately arose in the young pub-

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Sir

Your Lordship's Letter is at a stay of an extra-
ordinary as such Letters ever have: for it seldom Man
ever kept pace with its Publisher.

The Scheme of your book I entirely see; Mean
I fully comprehend. I would wish there you left out Mean
an Incorrect Piece, for it seems a Lazy Piece.

Go to Mr Davis in Russel Street, Show him
that Letter, and Show him the Book if he desires to see
it. He will tell you what Price you may print, and
so what Bookseller you should apply.

If you succeed in selling your Book, you may do
better than by dedicating it to me, you may perhaps ob-
tain permission to dedicate it to the Bishop of London

Fac-simile of Letter written by Dr. Johnson

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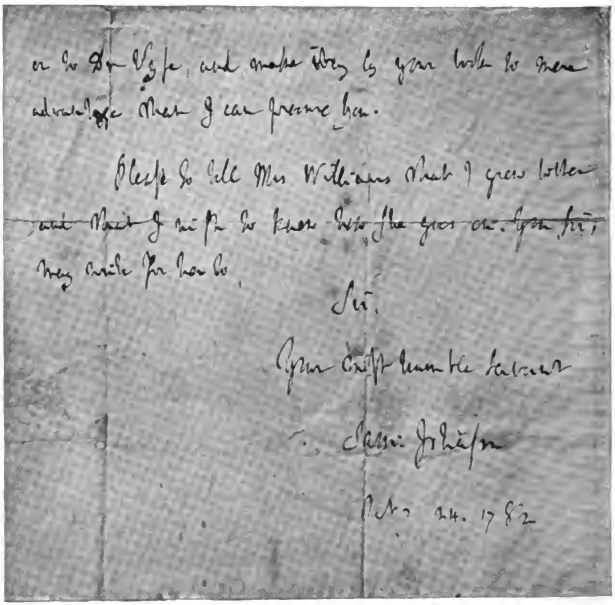

or to the Office, and make thy Will to your Lordship as much as I can procure him.

Please to tell Mrs Williams that I greet her well and that I wish to know how she goes on upon this Way, which for her to

Sir,

Your Christ[ian] humble Servant

Jesse Foulkes

Dec[em]b[e]r 24. 1782

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lisher's mind, "To whom does this letter belong?" At one moment the fortunate possessor would shut up the book and start for home, in the next he rapidly retraced his steps, and at last did not pause until he had again reached the door of the small shop where his purchase had been made. By this time he had resolved what to do; he would first discover if the seller of the book knew of the existence of this treasure, and then they could decide together upon the right step to take. The bookseller was astonished at the sight of the letter, and confessed at once that he could make no claim upon it, as he was ignorant of its existence until that moment. However, the matter was soon settled to the satisfaction of both parties; they decided upon the price such a letter should bring, and one-half of the value was paid to the bookseller, who had unconsciously allowed such a prize to slip through his fingers. In "My Friend's Library," the letter appears in print for the first time, but a fac-simile is given here.

It is addressed to the Rev. Mr. Compton, who was a Benedictine monk living in Paris

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when Dr. Johnson first went there, in 1775. The monks entertained him in the most friendly way, giving him one of their own cells for his headquarters. James Compton questioned Dr. Johnson on the subject of the Protestant faith, and asked if he might come to see him in Bolt Court. "In the summer of 1782, he paid the Doctor a visit, and informed him of his desire to be admitted into the Church of England. Johnson managed the matter satisfactorily for him, and he was received into Communion. . . . Through Johnson's kindness he was nominated chaplain at the French Chapel of St. James. . . . Thus by the friendly hand of the hard-working lexicographer, Mr. Compton was led from poverty up to a secure competency, and a place among the influential dignitaries of London society." Recalling some of the fine humanities of the men of that period, Thackeray speaks out in a burst of eloquence. "O you, fine gentlemen! You Marches and Selwyns and Chesterfields, how small you look by the side of these great men!" And again, after quoting "the verses—the sacred verses"

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on the death of Levett, which it goes hardly with me not to copy again here, he continues: "I hold old Johnson (and shall we not pardon James Boswell some errors for embalming him for us?) to be the great supporter of the British Monarchy and Church during the last age. . . . What a humanity the old man had! He was a kindly partaker of all honest pleasures. . . . When he used to frequent Garrick's theatre, and had 'the liberty of the scenes,' he says, 'All the actresses knew me, and dropped me a curtsey as they passed to the stage.' That would make a pretty picture; it is a pretty picture in my mind, of youth, folly, gayety, tenderly surveyed by wisdom's merciful pure eyes."

Standing with the above-mentioned copy of Rasselas is a "First Edition" of "Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides," a book which brings one as near to shaking hands with the author as anything now in existence. It wears a coat of brown leather lined with the marbled paper of that period, and the title-page reads, "A Tour to the Western Islands of Scotland, 1775." The matter has that rare quality in

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an old book of travel, of preserving its interest to this day. The wild scenery of the north of Scotland has seldom been more vividly portrayed. Sir Walter Scott has thrown his enchanting light upon it, and we have seen much in company with the Princess of Thule, but the truthful and often bald narratives of the experiences of Johnson and Boswell on the "Tour" are not out-worn.

The American reprint of the work issued in 1810 stands by the side of the original edition with a coat made to match! Inside the cover of the first edition is written in pencil, "With suppressed passages; see Davies's 'Journey Round the Library of a Bibliomaniac.'" This volume belonged to a certain Davies whose initials are indistinct, but presumably to Thomas Davies the bookseller, to whom there are a good many references in the "Life and Letters" of Johnson.*

* Boswell says: "Mr. Thomas Davies, the actor, who then kept a bookseller's shop in Russell Street, Covent Garden, told me that Johnson was very much his friend, and came frequently to his house, where he more than once invited me to meet him. . . . At last, on Monday, May 16th, when I was

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Dr. Samuel Johnson.

(Engraved by Watson from portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds, painted for the Duke of Sutherland in 1770.)

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In the American edition of the "Tour" there is also a pencil inscription referring to a beautiful verse of which Johnson was a sincere admirer—often was this quatrain quoted by the lovers of true poetry who lingered a century later around the London breakfast-table of Samuel Rogers. Mr. Fields wrote it on this fly-leaf with a reference to the page upon which it is introduced. Boswell narrates the occasion as follows:

"We came to Nairn to breakfast; though a county town, and a royal burgh, it is a miserable place. Over the room where we sat, a girl was spinning wool with a great wheel, and singing an Erse song: 'I'll warrant you' (said Dr. Johnson) 'one of the songs of Ossian.' He then repeated these lines:

'Verse sweetens toil, however rude the sound.
All at her work the village maiden sings:
Nor while she turns the giddy wheel around
Revolves the sad vicissitudes of things."

sitting in Mr. Davies's back parlor, after having drank tea with him and Mrs. Davies, Johnson unexpectedly came into the shop. . . . I never pass by it [Boswell adds in a note] without feeling reverence."

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"I thought I had heard these lines.

"'I fancy not, sir,' Johnson replied; 'they are in a detached poem, the name of which I do not remember, written by one Giffard, a parson.'"

This verse is not a single instance of the manner in which a perfect line or quatrain, as in this case, will sometimes avoid the sweeping waters of oblivion. Long after the generations of men who first heard it and the generations of poets who loved it have passed on, the living verse still lingers to sweeten the toil of life.

The latest editor of Johnson's letters, Dr. Birkbeck Hill, who is not easily foiled in any research, determined to hunt up the author of the stanza. He discovers him to have been Rev. Richard Gifford, not Giffard, who wrote a poem called "Contemplation," two years after Gray's "Elegy," and perhaps suggested by it, in which the verse in question occurs. Mr. Gifford "mentioned with much satisfaction that Johnson quoted the poem in his Dictionary," but it is quoted with changes which make it the beautiful thing we know. Gifford wrote:

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Ludlow Castle, the scene of Milton's "Comus."

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"Verse softens toil, however rude the sound;
She feels no biting pang the while she sings,
Nor as she turns the giddy wheel around
Revolves the sad vicissitude of things."

Dr. Johnson has, with a few touches, shown us what a poet can do to help the verse writer. The second line, which is his own:

"All at her work the village maiden sings,"

is a drama moving to music, the centre and life of the verse.

I have elsewhere referred to an edition of Boswell's Johnson, owned by Leigh Hunt; but in this connection I may speak of it more fully in relation to Dr. Johnson and his editors. Croker, against whose work Dr. Birkbeck Hill empties the vials of his just wrath, has nevertheless, by means of the skill of John Murray, the publisher, made a very pretty edition in ten comfortable little volumes, containing illustrations and dignities commensurate with the name on the title-page: "The Right Honorable John Wilson Croker, M. P."

Mr. Fields has pasted upon the fly-leaf of the first volume the following description from

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the *Ladies' Magazine*, London, 1784, December 20, of Dr. Johnson's funeral.

"This day," the paragraph reads, "the remains of the much-lamented Dr. Samuel Johnson were interred in Westminster Abbey. The procession, consisting of a hearse and six with the corpse, and ten mourning coaches and four, set out from Bolt Court, Fleet Street, a few minutes after twelve o'clock, being followed by several gentlemen's carriages, most of the company in which were in mourning. At one o'clock the corpse arrived at the Abbey, where it was met by Dr. Taylor (who read the funeral service) and several prebendaries, and conducted to the Poet's Corner, and laid close to the remains of David Garrick, Esq. The principal mourners on this solemn occasion were Sir Joshua Reynolds, Mr. Edmund Burke, Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Coleman, and the deceased's faithful black servant. There were present besides, Dr. Priestly, Dr. Horsley, General Paoli, and other distinguished persons. A great concourse of people were assembled, who behaved with a degree of decency suitable to the solemn occasion."

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The brevity and dignity of this account contrast with the "scare-heads" and flaming lines and portraits sometimes given in notices of the "great occasions" of to-day; nevertheless there is a nearness to facts and persons which enables us to review the whole scene.

In this edition also there is an engraving from a portrait by Bartolozzi, of Dr. Johnson, inserted in the fly-leaf, which differs from Reynolds's portraits by giving a look of kindly inquiry to the face. There is less intellectual assertion and a gentle look of human interest which must have been native to it in certain moods, because it belonged to his character.

The notes from Thomas Holcroft also, to which a former reference has been made, cover several finely written pages in Leigh Hunt's hand; their bearing is chiefly upon the character of Boswell, from whose snobbishness Holcroft had evidently suffered. Miss Mitford* gives the sketch of the life and history of

* Miss Mitford's paper upon Thomas Holcroft may be found in her "Recollections of a Literary Life." She speaks of his memoirs, begun by himself and concluded by Hazlitt, as being a very curious history, both for the vicissitudes of the life and the indomitable character of the man.

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Holcroft, who was a man of great talent; but being the son of a shoemaker, he suffered more keenly from Boswell's meanness than others who have written of him from more favorable points of view. Sastres, an Italian, is also quoted as disliking Boswell, and Hunt remarks that "the omission of Boswell's name in Johnson's will is remarkable and, I cannot but think, very damaging." All the extracts from Holcroft are worthy to be read as a part of the history of the time, and of individuals who have made that time memorable.

Leigh Hunt's notes usually have something which makes them interesting; they do not possess always the highest value, by any means, but there is either a personal or a literary flavor about them which will doubtless give most of them a place in the editions of the future. For instance, where Johnson is speaking of his first London lodgings and says, "It used to cost the rest a shilling for their dinner, for they drank wine; but I had a cut of meat for sixpence, and bread for a penny, and gave the waiter a penny; so that I was quite as well served, nay, better than the rest, for they gave the waiter

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nothing." "Lord Byron," says Leigh Hunt in a note, "in repeating this story, of which he was fond, used to dwell upon these particular words, 'a cut of meat,' with great and pleasant gusto." This scrap gives us a glimpse of the every-day Byron, and reminds us of another exclamation of his, quoted by one of his biographers, that he hated to see women eat.

There would be a much greater pleasure in turning over the old pages of what is now a very rare book, "Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson by Mrs. Piozzi," if our faith in that lady had not been very rudely shaken of late by certain newly-found letters. But it smacks of the daily life of the great man, and must always be precious to us, remembering the days and hours he passed in affectionate intercourse under the roof of Mrs. Thrale. We must take the bitter with the sweet when we accept such benefactions as were conferred upon the world by herself and James Boswell; and if we are sometimes inclined to feel that we wish to hear nothing further from either of these personages, let us reflect for one instant what the world of letters would suffer if their work were

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withdrawn. Let us recall what Johnson himself said, quoted by Mrs. Piozzi in this same book: "The cup of life is surely bitter enough without squeezing in the hateful rind of resentment."

He was indebted to Mrs. Thrale for a delightful house of refuge, and if in later years she was less kind to him than the angels, he was not ungrateful nor willing to think ill of her. There are one or two extant portraits of her, but in the picture by Hogarth called "The Lady's Last Stake," her features are said by some adventurous believers in the legend to be more truly portrayed than anywhere else. Miss Lynch was about eighteen years old when she sat to Hogarth for the figure in this picture. It was engraved at Lord Macaulay's suggestion in 1861, for Hayward's edition of the "Autobiography of Mrs. Piozzi."

Johnson used to say that "the size of a man's understanding might always be justly measured by his mirth." His own love of wit and humor found scope and appreciation in his friendship with Garrick. The life of the great actor by Arthur Murphy, printed in Red Lion

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"The Lady's Last Stake," by Hogarth.
Said to be a portrait of Miss Hester Lynch (Mrs. Thrale).

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Passage in 1801, is likely to be rather a rare book now. It contains a copy of the fine portrait of Garrick by Reynolds, engraved by Schiavonetti, and is in itself most pleasant reading.* Here we find Dr. Johnson and Garrick going to London together, the former with a tragedy in his pocket; here we find descriptions of the great actresses of the period, of Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Abington, Mrs. Clive, and the rest of that delightful galaxy; all of them only too glad to share the stage and the applause with Garrick. And here also we find Johnson writing a Prologue for his friend "in a stile, if we except Pope's to the tragedy of 'Cato,' superior to everything of the kind in the English language."

Garrick at length brought out Dr. Johnson's

* The *Athenæum* of May, 1894, says, in commenting upon a new and excellent Life of Garrick, just published, that "Tom Davies's volumes are interesting and perfectly unaffected; Murphy's, a turgid performance, amusing from its florid bursts, but valueless from its emptiness of facts and details."

Valueless it may be to the lovers of research, but full of the flavor of contemporaneous writing.—A. F.

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tragedy of "Irene," but although it held the stage nine nights, "the united powers of Garrick, Barry, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Pritchard could not raise it into vogue." *

"The celebrated Dr. Smollett," too, appears upon the stage of life presented in these pages,

Garrick's Villa.

with a farce in his hand which seems to have made no great effect. Altogether, Arthur Murphy produced a friendly book, and he was

* Byron wrote:

"A haltered heroine Johnson sought to slay;
We saved Irene, but half damned the play."

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evidently quite worthy of the strong liking which Dr. Johnson had for him.*

One good thing among others which should have been in his pages, he has failed to record. There is an epigram made by one of the wits of the period, which was often upon Mr. Fields's lips when the actors of that day were discussed; it refers to the rivalry between Garrick and Barry at the time when "the town" was divided upon the subject of their merits. The author of the verses is not known,† but they read as follows:

"The town has found out diff'rent ways
To praise the diff'rent Lears;
To Barry they give loud huzza's!
To Garrick only tears.‡

* It was Arthur Murphy who first introduced Dr. Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, and doubtless the sentiment of gratitude also mingled with his liking for the young man.

† Since writing the above a friendly correspondent informs me that the author is Rev. Richard Kendal, of Peterhouse, Cambridge, and refers me to Dodd's "Epigrammatists." In the "Life of Garrick," by Percy Fitzgerald, the lines are attributed to one "Mr. Berenger."

‡ A slight difference will be seen in the reading of this first stanza, as found in the old renderings and in the verse as it stands in "Yesterdays with Authors." In the latter version,

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"A king! ay, every inch a king,
Such Barry doth appear;
But Garrick's quite another thing,
He's every inch King Lear!"

The verses and Johnson's favorite stanza, quoted above, both carry us to the breakfast table of the poet Rogers, where these good things were to be heard, having been stored away in his capacious memory. Rogers was very friendly to the young American publisher from the first moment of their acquaintance, and it was at one of these famous breakfasts that he called his old attendant Edmund to his side, and bade him bring a copy of his poems to present to Mr. Fields.

which was repeated from a memory of Rogers's recitation, we find it set down as follows:

"The town have chosen different ways
To praise their different Lears:
To Barry they give loud applause—
To Garrick only tears."

Surely there is better grammar as well as a flavor of the antique in the old stanza which is delightful and superior to this. The second stanza I have been unable to find in the older records of that time, although it may be in the Life of Garrick by Tom Davies, which I have not at hand.

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When the man returned he handed Rogers the small edition; he was again despatched to find one of the beautiful copies in two volumes which were already famous for their exquisite illustrations and book-making. This edition will long be a model for its perfect binding and printing, apart from the uncommon excellence of the reproductions of original designs, made for Rogers chiefly by Stothard and Turner. The pictures from which the engravings were made, by Goodall, Finden, and others, already adorned the walls of his house. The external beauty of these volumes almost makes one forget to speak of their contents; but any true lover of letters will rejoice in the scholarly character of the verses, and will find the notes most interesting reading.

The word "scholarly" easily leads us to Gray, whose work was especially venerated by the owner of this library. During Mr. Fields's first visit to England, Stoke Pogis, where Gray lies buried, was one of the places he chose to visit, and where we find him in the twilight copying the inscription from the monument. Later in life he came into posses-

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sion of two books which belonged to Gray, both of them containing interesting autographs and notes.

His sincere admiration of the poet led him to gather everything which fell in his way belonging to his work or to his life. Among these relics is an autógraph fragment, consisting of many pages of a chronological history which Gray was preparing at the time of his death. The clear, neat writing is to be envied; there is no mistaking the letters, nor are they cramped nor formal. There is also an old quarto volume containing "The Poems of Mr. Gray, to which are prefixed Memoirs of his Life and Writings, by W. Mason, M.A.," 1775. As Gray lived to 1771, this is probably the first edition of his life and works given to the world. Prefixed to the poems stand these words of Quinctilian: "Multum et veræ gloriæ, quamvis uno libro, meruit."

It would be a weariness to the reader, were the various editions and readings of Gray, scattered through other shelves, to be enumerated; —some quaint, others magnificent "specimens of book-making," others simply a "last edi-

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tion." But they bear witness to the love of at least one reader in spite of the devouring waves of a whole century of time.

Mr. Fields mentions, in "My Friend's Library," the volume of "The Rape of the Lock," which belonged to Charles Lamb. The missing pages torn from the little book (for which it appears Lamb paid sixpence) are restored in his own beautiful handwriting. It seems to bring us somewhat nearer to Lamb, to find that thirteen years after his death, when Mr. Fields was calling upon Moxon, the publisher—who married, it will be remembered, Emma Isola, the adopted child of Charles and Mary Lamb—Moxon showed his American friend the remnant of Elia's library, and gave him at the same time this precious book from the collection.* A new and beautiful edition

* Mr. Fields says: "Perhaps the most interesting to me of all the private libraries I have ever seen in England, was the small collection of Charles and Mary Lamb, which Edward Moxon, the publisher, unlocked for me when I was first in England, before the books were dispersed, as they never ought to have been. Then and there I lovingly handled his Kit Marlowe, his Drummond of Hawthornden, his Drayton, his Cowley, and his Burton! I remember how Moxon's whole

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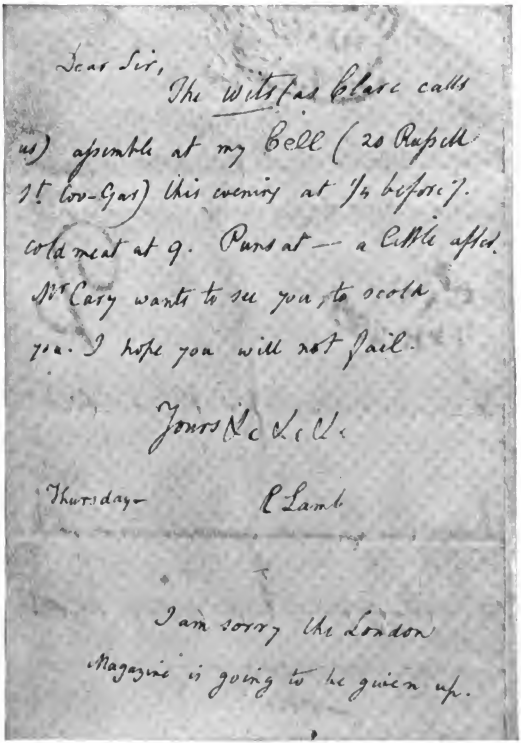

Dear Sir,

The Wits (as Clare calls us) assemble at my Cell (20 Russell St Cov-Gar) this evening at ½ before 7. cold meat at 9. Puns at — a Little after. Mr Cary wants to see you, to scold you. I hope you will not fail.

Yours &c &c

Thursday — C Lamb

I am sorry the London Magazine is going to be given up.

Fac-simile of a Letter from Charles Lamb.

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of Lamb's works, edited by Thomas Noon Talfourd, had then been published only a few years (1840). It was evidently one of Mr. Fields's most valued books.* He also managed to find a copy of "Mrs. Leicester's School," by Mary Lamb, to which, Talfourd says, "Lamb contributed three of the tales. The best, how-

family stood around that 'Life of the Duke of Newcastle by his Duchess,' and told stories of Lamb's enthusiasm over the book, a volume about which he has written: 'No casket is rich enough, no casing sufficiently durable to honor and keep safe such a jewel.'"

* Everything connected with Lamb has such human interest, and the portraits of him are so unsatisfactory, that the following description of his person by Leigh Hunt, who knew him intimately, is of value to modern readers. Leigh Hunt says: "Charles Lamb had a head worthy of Aristotle, with as fine a heart as ever beat in human bosom, and limbs very fragile to sustain it. There was a caricature of him sold in the shops, which pretended to be a likeness. Procter (Barry Cornwall) went into the shop in a passion, and asked the man what he meant by putting forth such a libel. The man apologized, and said that the artist meant no offense. There never was a true portrait of Lamb. His features were strongly yet delicately cut; he had a fine eye as well as forehead; and no face carried in it greater marks of thought and feeling. It resembled that of Bacon, with less worldly vigor and more sensibility."

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ever, are his sister's as he delighted to insist; and no tales more happily adapted to nurture all sweet and childlike feelings in children were ever written." We of a later century do not concur with Lamb's estimate, especially when we read that lovely tale about going to church, which is a model, and the despair of young story writers. "The Poetry for Children," another joint publication, is safely kept among the beloved treasures, also Lamb's "Ulysses." These are all pretty little books, and early editions, though probably not the first. One of the autograph letters of Lamb, laid among these memorials, has an amusing anecdote connected with its transfer to our shelf. Barry Cornwall (Mr. Procter) was talking of Lamb, one day, with Mr. Fields, speaking of his own tender love for him and looking over his letters. "I will give you this one!" he said. "Cram it into your pocket, for I hear my wife coming down stairs, and perhaps she won't let you carry it off."

Mrs. Procter was for the larger part of a century one of the most brilliant women in London society. Dickens said of her that no

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matter how brilliant the men were who surrounded her—and they were all that London had of the best—she always gave the last and wittiest rejoinder. Her powers of social endurance were wonderful. The *Saturday Review* said of her that "Lady Kew herself, whom Mrs. Procter did not otherwise resemble, was not a more indefatigable diner-out and attendant at evening parties. . . . It was intellectual society which she enjoyed and to which she contributed at least as much as she derived from it. . . . The graphic simplicity with which she told her stories was beyond all praise. . . . Her crisp, sharp sentences were a rebuke to the mumbled sins against sense and grammar which too often pass muster for English conversation. . . . Mrs. Procter might have repeated with absolute sincerity the touching lines of Lamb.* 'She warmed both hands before the fire of life, and when it sank she was ready to depart.'" The last time I had the pleasure of seeing her, she had long passed her eightieth birthday. She had "assisted" in the morning at a marriage in the family of Lord Houghton; she had

* The words are Landor's.

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lunched in company; she was holding a reception at her own house, and, in speaking with a young lady who was taking leave, I heard her say: "But I shall see you this evening!" "No," said the young lady; "I am rather tired after our day, and I shall not go out again." "Nonsense, my child," answered the old soldier. "Why, I am going to dine out first, and go to the reception afterward. What is the matter with you young people?"

When she passed away, a few years ago, the world lost almost the last person acquainted nearly and socially with the brilliant group of poets who made the first quarter of the century an epoch in English literature. The *London Academy* said of her: "By her mother's marriage with Basil Montagu, she was brought, when quite a child, into contact with Lamb and Coleridge, Keats and Leigh Hunt, and other men of note, who frequented the house of the editor of Bacon, and she speedily learned to hold her own among the wits, her masterful and clear intellect early asserting itself. By her own marriage with Barry Cornwall, whose 'Mirandola' had three years before stirred the

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town, with Macready in the title part, and Charles Kemble as *Guido*, she cemented her connection with the world of letters, and became the close friend of a younger generation —of Thackeray and Dickens, the Laureate and Mr. Browning. She survived to be looked up to with respect and curiosity by a third generation, to whom the friends of her youth were English classics, *quietis ascripti ordinibus Deorum*. Not that Mrs. Procter was at all a mere repository of reminiscences. She took a keen interest in the topics of the day, and her talk was admirable, both for what she said and the way in which she said it. She held strong opinions of her own on most subjects, and about most people, and often her expression of them was more emphatic than cautious, and this earned her a reputation for bitterness she did not deserve, for she was essentially kind-hearted."

Mrs. Procter had at one time written down a number of recollections of the eminent men she had known; but she was so shocked by the posthumous publication of Carlyle's 'Reminiscences,' that she is believed to have de-

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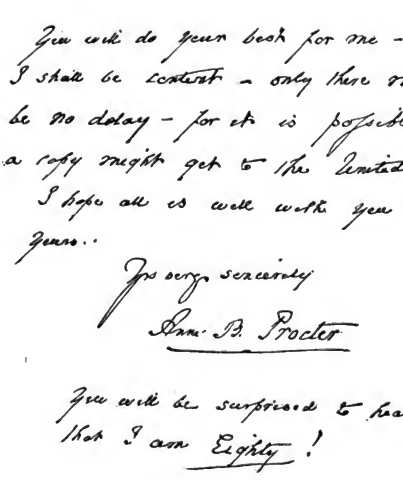
You will do your best for me - and
I shall be content - only there must
be no delay - for it is possible that
a copy might get to the United States
I hope all is well with you &
yours.

Yrs very sincerely
Anne B. Procter

You will be surprised to learn
that I am Eighty!

Fac-simile of a portion of a letter from Mrs. Procter.

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stroyed her diaries as well as the letters in her possession. Thackeray's letters to her, which were numerous and interesting, were thus irrevocably lost among the rest.

Lowell, who saw Mrs. Procter frequently, was, of course, justly esteemed by her as one of the most delightful of all her shining company. "Something might be written about her," he said when the news of her death came to America. But unless Mr. Henry James can do it for us, we now seem to lack the mental camera which will throw on paper the portrait of this distinguished woman as she moved through a long half-century of London society.

In one of Mrs. Procter's letters to Mr. Fields, after her husband's death, she says: "You knew and loved my dear one! He never blew his own trumpet, and the foolish world requires you to say, 'Fall down, adore me; I am the cleverest man living.' There is a true story of Sydney Smith and Macaulay. The latter had been on a visit to the great wit, and, on seeing him off in the stage-coach, he said: "Farewell, Macaulay; let no man persuade you that you

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are not the greatest man in the world. . . . The fault of the memoirs is that there are no letters of my husband's. Foster had destroyed his, and the Brownings' also. . . . And his letters to me were too tender to be printed in my lifetime.

"Your old friend,

"ANNA B. PROCTER."

QUEEN ANNE'S MANSION,
S. W. LONDON.

. . . . . .

We have left Charles and Mary Lamb while we hold the letter of the former in our hands, in order to speak of the donors; but we cannot willingly leave them yet altogether. Near by are the letters and books and manuscripts of Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke, who knew Lamb, and through whom we have, as it were, been in touch with him. Mr. Cowden Clarke says of Lamb: "It seems as if it were yesterday that I noted his eager way, when he was at Margate, of telling me about an extraordinarily large whale that had been captured there; of its having created lively interest in the place; of its having been conveyed away

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in a strong cart, on which it lay a huge mass of colossal height; when he added, with one of his sudden droll, penetrating glances, 'The eye has just gone past our window.'"

In one of his letters he says: "Your books are as the gushing of streams in a desert. By the way, you have sent no autobiographies. Your letter seems to imply you had. Nor do I want any. Cowden, they are of the books which I give away." A copy of the final "Memorials of Lamb," given to Mr. Fields by Moxon, begins to look like one of the books of which Lamb was fond. He used to hug a rare folio all the nearer to his heart for its worn edges and shabby binding.

Talfourd speaks in this book of the *London Magazine* as being the exciting cause of the "Essays of Elia." Even in those days, it appears, a great stimulus was given to the world of literature by the creation of a magazine; and we cannot fail to look with interest upon the tall ragged volumes of *The Tattler*, *The London Journal*, and other survivors of those times.

The London Magazine itself, however, pre-

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sents a noble front, perfect in its line and brave in leather binding, with gilt letters. "Never," says Talfourd, "was a periodical work commenced with happier auspices. . . . There was Lamb, at his indiscreetest, best; Barry Cornwall, . . . streaking the darkest passion with beauty; John Hamilton Reynolds, . . . and Hazlitt, who was giving some of his best work to the world for the first time through this medium." The name of John Hamilton Reynolds is sailing safely down to posterity upon the wing of Keats. The following exquisite verses are among the poems which are connected with his name. These lines are too little known. Buxton Forman says: "Keats seems to have been really writing in a kind of spiritual parallelism with the thrush's song, . . . following in a sense the bird's methods of repetition." Therefore he entitles them, "What the Thrush said: Lines from a Letter to John Hamilton Reynolds":

"O thou whose face hath felt the winter's wind,
Whose eye hath seen the snow-clouds hung in mist,
And the black elm tops 'mong the freezing stars,

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To thee the spring will be a harvest time;
O thou, whose only book has been the light
Of supreme darkness which thou feddest on
Night after night when Phœbus was away,
To thee the spring shall be a triple morn.
O fret not after knowledge; I have none.
And yet my song comes native with the warmth.
O fret not after knowledge; I have none.
And yet the evening listens. He who saddens
At thought of idleness cannot be idle,
And he's awake who thinks himself asleep."

In the year 1796 a small book was printed with the title "Original Letters, etc., of Sir John Falstaff." The copy before me bears the inscription "See Charles Lamb's reference to this little book." Following this lead, we find in Talfourd's life that it was written by "Jem White," of whose humor Lamb once said, "There never was the like! We never shall see such days as those in which Jem flourished."

"All that now remains of Jem," Talfourd continues, "is the celebration of the supper which he gave to the young chimney sweepers, in the Elia of his friend, and a thin duodecimo volume which he published in 1796,

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under the title of 'The Letters of John Falstaff,' with a dedication (printed in black letter) to Master Samuel Irelaunde, which those who knew Lamb at the time believed to be his." "White's Letters," said Lamb, in writing to a friend about this time, "are near publication. His frontispiece is a good conceit; Sir John learning to dance to please Madame Page, in dress of doublet, etc., from the upper half, and modern pantaloons, with shoes of the eighteenth century, from the lower half, and the whole work is full of goodly quips and rare fancies, 'all deftly masked like poor antiquity.'"

It is said that Lamb never found one of these little books in a stall, or thrown aside among a pile of unsalable writings, that he did not buy it. He could always get it for sixpence a copy. In this way he kept all his friends provided. In writing to Manning, to whom he had evidently sent a copy, he says: "I hope by this time you are prepared to say the 'Falstaff Letters' are a bundle of the sharpest, queerest, profoundest humorous, of any these juice-drained latter times have

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spawned." It is rather a curious fact, also, that there was an American reprint of these "Letters" in 1813, nearly eighteen years after their issue, because we cannot help whispering, in spite of Charles Lamb's enthusiasm for his friend's work, that they seem to good judges at this period to be quite unreadable. Southey, Moxon, Talfourd, and Ainger all seem to agree that Lamb had a hand in the editorship, and surely the preface is full of his wit. It is a precious little book, because Lamb loved it, and Mr. Fields wrote inside. "Oh, be careful of it!"

As I lay this favorite relic aside, my eye is caught by the poems of Katherine Philips, "The Matchless Orinda," whose folio, published in 1678, is at hand. I fear the poems of this lady might have been overlooked in this age of many books, if the appreciation of a great poet had not rescued her from oblivion. In one of Keats's letters to Reynolds he says: "I had longed for some real feminine modesty in these things, and was therefore gladdened in the extreme on opening, the other day, a book of poetry written

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by one beautiful Miss Philips, a friend of Jeremy Taylor's, and called 'The Matchless Orinda.' You must have heard of her, and most likely read her poetry. I wish you have not, that I may have the pleasure of treating you with a few stanzas." He took the pains to transcribe one of the poems in full, the same that Buxton Forman copies in the Appendix to his "Life of Keats," and Lord Houghton reproduced in 1848, and, of course, Sidney Colvin later.

These poems of Katherine Philips have had a strange history. Some years before her death a surreptitious edition had been printed without her knowledge, and was upon the eve of being issued to the public when the fraud was discovered through the agency of a friend. In spite of every possible precaution, it appears that many of the copies were sold afterward. She writes a letter to the friend who did her the kind office to withdraw the stolen volume from the public, saying: "This is a most cruel accident, and hath made so proportionate an impression on me, that really it hath cost me a sharp fit of sickness since I heard it." Not

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many years later she was snatched out of life by the ravaging small-pox, at the age of thirty-one. After her death the effort was made to publish her poems correctly, but with limited success, because they lacked her own revision. The portrait of her, also, is said to be "not very like her, only a poor paper-shadow." But the poems themselves have the true poetic life in them which Keats's keen sense discerned.

The poem which he chiefly loved is written to "Mrs. Mary Aubrey at Parting," and contains verses of the most exquisite beauty. It would take too much space to transcribe the whole poem here, but we cannot pass on without giving one or two of the stanzas:

"And thus we can no absence know,
Nor shall we be confined;
Our active souls will daily go
To learn each other's mind.

Nay, should we never meet to sense,
Our souls would hold intelligence.

. . . . . .

"By my own temper I shall guess
At thy felicity,
And only like my happiness
Because it pleaseth thee.

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Our hearts at any time will tell
If thou or I be sick or well."

Keats loved these poems for their womanly, as well as their poetic, qualities. Where else can we look in all literature for such an apotheosis of love between woman and woman—love on earth even as it is in heaven? She was a true lover indeed. Was there ever one quite like her? One of these poems is addressed:

To my excellent Lucasia on our friendship:

"I did not live until this time
Crowned my felicity,
When I could say without a crime,
I am not thine, but thee."

We find a poem addressed to Mr. Henry Lawes,* which carries us back into the circle of Milton's friends once more.

* "Henry Lawes, who composed the musick for Comus and performed the combined characters of the Spirit and the shepherd Thyrsis in this drama, was the son of Thomas Lawes, a vicar-choral of Salisbury Cathedral." . . . He appears to have been well acquainted with the best poets and the most respectable and popular of the nobility of his times. . . . Lawes is said to be the first who introduced the Italian style of music into England. . . . He died

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To him she writes:

"Beauty is but composure, and we find
Content is but the concord of the mind.
. . . . . .
So poets on the lower world look down,
But LAWES on them; his height is all his own;

in 1662, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Of all the testimonies paid to his merit by his contemporaries, Milton's commendation, in the thirteenth sonnet and in some of the speeches in "Comus," must be esteemed the most honorable.

SONNET XIII.

To Mr. H. Lawes, on the publishing his Airs.

Harry, whose tuneful and well-measured song
First taught our English music how to span
Words with just note and accent, not to scan
With Midas ears, committing short and long.

Thy worth and skill exempts thee from the throng,
With praise enough for envy to look wan;
To after age thou shalt be writ the man,
That with smooth air couldst humor best our tongue.

Thou honor'st verse, and verse must lend her wing
To honor thee, the priest of Phœbus' quire,
That tun'st their happiest lines in hymn or story;
Dante shall give Fame leave to set thee higher
Than his Casella, whom he woo'd to sing,
Met in the milder shades of Purgatory.

"The songs of Lawes, to a very great number, are to be found in the collections entitled 'Select Musical Ayres and Dialogues,' folio 1652; 'Ayres and Dialogues,' 1653; and 'The Treasury of Music,' 1669. . . . Among them are most of the songs of Waller set by Lawes."

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For, like Divinity itself, his lyre
Rewards the wit it did at first inspire,
And thus by double right poets allow
His and their laurel should adorn his brow."

Henry Lawes.

Her wit is charming! See the following:

" Hoist up the sail, cry'd they who understand
No word that carries kindness for the LAND;
Such sons of clamour, that I wonder not
They love the sea, whom sure some storm begot."

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Of pleasure she writes:

"We covet pleasure easily,
But it not so possess;
For many things must make it be,
But one may make it less;
Nay, were our state as we could choose it,
'Twould be consumed by fear to lose it."

And again of death:

"If I be sure my soul is safe,
And that my actions will provide
My tomb a nobler epitaph,
Than that I only live and dy'd,

"So that in various accidents
I conscience may, and honor keep;
I with that ease and innocence
Shall die as infants go to sleep."

We find ourselves let loose in a flower-bed; how can we stop gathering the beautiful things! Keats is half at fault for this, for he led us hither. But the old book must be resolutely closed with a commendation to those who love true simple poetry to get the volume of "The Matchless Orinda" and read her verses!

As I turn to review the books once more, I

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seem to see one kindly face—large, full of humor, full of human sympathies, which makes me forget the shelves and consider "first editions" as childishness. The face belongs to Thackeray, and I can recall his goodness to one who, although married already, was hardly more than "a slip of a girl," and very much afraid of him. Afraid, let me say, rather of the idea of him, the great author and famous lecturer, who was making his crowded audiences laugh or cry at his simple word every evening; the great man of the moment whom everybody was "running after," yet of whom they said that he liked his friends so much better than all their noise about himself that he was always trying to escape from it, and here he was! coming to see—whom? Well, it appears it did not so much matter, for he was bent on kindnesses, and he took it all in at a glance, and sat down by the window and drew me to him and told me about his "little girls" at home. How he walked down the wrong side of Piccadilly one day, and so lost what money he had out of his pocket—money which belonged properly to these same dear

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girls of his; therefore it came about that he made up his mind, though it was hard enough, to come away from them and get something to take back to them in place of what he had lost, and how they were the dearest girls in the world, and when I came to England I should find them more like two old friends, and should have somebody, I am sure he thought, "to play with," though under the circumstances he could not use just those words!

And then, soon after, he went away, leaving a great trail of sunshine and kindness behind him, which has never faded.

The next time I saw him among the books, was with a company of gentlemen who had been asked to meet him. I remember he was told that Rufus Choate was one of the invited guests, but he had not yet made his appearance. A note from Mr. Choate came in after the little group was assembled, and it was a great amusement to them all, the effort to decipher the almost undecipherable handwriting. The gist of the matter was at length reached—he could not come. And Thackeray,

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Thackeray when about Thirty Years Old.

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who had never heard—but only heard of—his eloquence, was greatly disappointed.

The joy of hearing the immortal lectures then began! How "everybody" went! How

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the matter and the manner were upon every tongue! There are two drawings on the shelf of him made by a young artist of the time, caricatures which, in spite of their absurdity, recall his delightful manner and looks as he stood before his audiences, to the life. I remember one other interview with Thackeray during his visit to America, in New York (and it is a digression to speak of it here, to be forgiven, I trust). He was coming down a long flight of steps into the street after one of the lectures. We were in front, and we were with Washington Irving (ah, what a joy that was, and what a gladness still to recall him!) Thackeray startled the little group by overtaking us and striking Irving briskly on the shoulder (they were evidently much at home together); then turning to us, "And here's the very little woman I was telling you of to-day!" at which sally, since he evidently had not been telling anything very serious, we all laughed, and then he began to relate the experiences of the evening. It was only a touch, a glance, a nothing, as one may say, but that warmth and sunlight of his nature always

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seemed to waken a new flower of existence into being where it shone even for an instant.

Tell Tale —

A Caricature by Cruikshank

Here are the first editions of some of his books: "The Rose and the Ring," "Dr. Birch and His Young Friends," "Rebecca and Ro-

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wena," and a review of Cruikshank's work made into a pretty little volume with original illustrations; but how we almost forget to speak of them when we are thinking of the dear writer himself.* I sometimes wonder if the "Unwritten Memoirs" will not some day recall one of the *Punch* dinners in Onslow Square, when I was allowed to sit up-stairs "with the ladies," his own "dear girls" (I do

* Thackeray's charm was never more delightfully exercised than in this paper upon Cruikshank. He says in it, "He is the friend of the young especially. Have we not all read the story-books that his wonderful pencil has illustrated? Did we not forego tarts, in order to buy his 'Breaking-Up' or his 'Fashionable Monstrosities' of the year eighteen hundred and something? . . . But though in our eyes Mr. Cruikshank reached his *apogée* some eighteen years since, it must not be imagined that such was really the case. Eighteen sets of children have since then learned to love and admire him, and may many more of their successors be brought up in the same delightful faith. . . . The reader will examine the work called 'My Sketch-Book' with not a little amusement, and may gather from it, as we fancy, a good deal of information regarding the character of the individual man, George Cruikshank. . . . Our artist loves to joke at a soldier. . . . Tall life-guardsmen and fierce grenadiers figure in many of his designs, and almost always in a ridiculous way."

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not recall any strangers), and how some of the good things were brought to us for dinner on a small table in the hall if I remember well, where Thackeray came now and then in the course of the evening to have a little jollity and see that the ball was rolling merrily upstairs as well as down. The good things which came with him were so much better than any of the good things which were brought for dinner, that I forget everything, what was said or what was done or what we ate, save that kind, loving, beneficent presence which will always remain in our hearts when the things of this world have passed away.

It need not be told here that Thackeray loved the great world and the strange, noble, and even ignoble creatures it contains; he loved delightful women always, and "liked to see them straight" as he says somewhere; and would have said to his favorites, as Dr. Johnson said to Mrs. Thrale, "Be brisk, and be splendid, and be publick;" but he loved above all his fireside-corner and his "little girls" and the friends they drew about them. Not the

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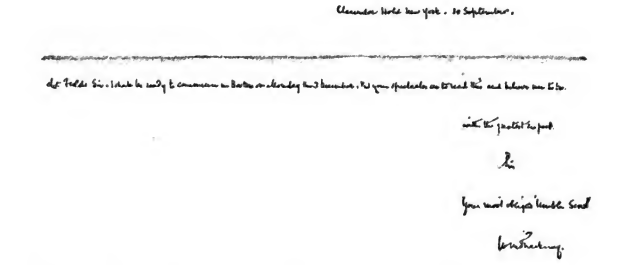

Fac-simile of a Note from Thackeray.

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least characteristic incident of his life is his flight home from America, leaving his engagements to lecture and everything else to take care of themselves, because he saw Christmas approaching and stockings which might be otherwise unfilled. He bravely said he was homesick; and with no excuse to any one, he stepped on board a Boston steamer, and vanished thus from the centre of his admirers.

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